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# Adler's Birth Order Theory

First-Born Children

Second and Middle Children

Youngest and Only Children

Other Family Situations

General Notes

Written by Ellen Swanson Topness 18 December, 2018

**Alfred Adler (1870-1937) developed theories of personality that focused on a therapist's need to understand an individual within the context of social environment.** According to Adler, character traits and behaviors derive primarily from developmental issues, including birth order.

## First-Born Children

**Adler believed that when a child is born impacts personality.** Based on his theory, for example, the oldest child -- prone to perfectionism and need for affirmation -- tends to become intellectual, conscientious and dominant in social settings. Adler attributes this to the child losing the parents' undivided attention and compensating throughout life by working to get it back. In addition, this child may be expected to set an example and be given responsibility for younger siblings.

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## Second and Middle Children

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Adler describes the second-born child as someone who has a "pacemaker." Since there is always someone who was there first, this child may grow to be more competitive, rebellious and consistent in attempting to be best. Middle children may struggle with figuring out their place in the family and, later, in the world.

**They are eager for parental praise and thus tend to develop gifts in the arts or academia in order to accomplish this goal.**

Due to their "middle" status, they also may be the most flexible and diplomatic members of the family.

- Adler describes the second-born child as someone who has a "pacemaker."
- Due to their "middle" status, they also may be the most flexible and diplomatic members of the family.

## Youngest and Only Children



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others. Only children do not have to share their parents' attention. They may have a hard time when they are told no, and school may be a difficult transition as they are not the sole focus of the teacher. **On a positive note, Adler believed that, compared to others their age, only children tend to be more mature, feel more comfortable around adults and even do better in intellectual and creative pursuits.**

- In Adler's theory, the youngest child may be dependent and selfish due to always being taken care of by family members.
- On a positive note, Adler believed that, compared to others their age, only children tend to be more mature, feel more comfortable around adults and even do better in intellectual and creative pursuits.

## Other Family Situations

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Adler also addressed specific family situations, such as twins. With twins, one is usually seen as the older and is stronger and more active. This one often becomes the leader, though both may develop identity problems due to being treated as one unit instead of two people. Another example Adler describes is an only boy among girls. He suggests this boy may develop into an adult who is always trying to prove his manhood or, conversely, may become effeminate. An only girl among boys may become very feminine or, attempting to outdo the boys, may become a tomboy. She may tend to work hard to please her father.

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## General Notes

**Adler offers some general notes for his birth order theory** <sup>3</sup>☆. He suggests that if more than three years are between children, various sub-groups of birth order may develop. In addition, a birth order position may be taken by another child if circumstances allow. Adler also acknowledges that for some people birth order may not be as significant an influence as parental attitudes, gender roles or socio-economic issues. He encouraged practitioners to understand the psychological situation in each family is different; birth order is simply one possible tool to help guide and assess.

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# Teacher and Parent Conflict

[How Conflict Arises](#)

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Written by [Jamie Mastrangelo](#) 08 July, 2011

Parents and teachers share in the responsibility of a child's education. The two should work cooperatively to foster a positive educational experience for a child. Often times, however conflicts do arise. There are several things parents can do to resolve conflicts effectively and come up with a resolution that is best for their children.



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important documents or information. Parents may also have a hard time dealing with the fact that someone else is "parenting" their child. Another common parental gripe is that the teacher is not giving the child enough attention or otherwise treating her inappropriately. Issues like these should initially be addressed with your child's teacher directly.

- According to [Essortment.com](#), conflicts between teachers and parents can arise in a number of ways.
- Another common parental gripe is that the teacher is not giving the child enough attention or otherwise treating her inappropriately.

## Conference Considerations

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Both parties must decide on a time and place to meet for a conference in order to come to a resolution. Professor of Early Childhood Education and educational author Lillian G. Katz says that after school is not always the best time. At 3 p.m., your child's teacher may be tired. After a long day, you may not get the best results out of him or her. First thing in the morning before work may be a good idea. Suggest meeting the teacher in the classroom so you can be in the environment your child is in all day. If the child is present at the parent-teacher conference, set a good example and model behavior that you would like your child to use in later life when coping with his own problems.



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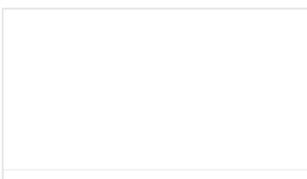
- Both parties must decide on a time and place to meet for a conference in order to come to a resolution.
- If the child is present at the parent-teacher conference, set a good example and model behavior that you would like your child to use in later life when coping with his own problems.

## Suggestions

According to Katz, parents should always talk directly with the teacher about the problem. Always make the teacher aware of the issue and then address other school personnel in the order specified by school policy. Always check the facts with the teacher before jumping to any conclusions or assigning blame. Katz also says to be careful not to criticize the teacher in front of the child. Even young children can pick up on the frustration a parent has about the school or the teacher [3](#). This may cause confusion and create an attitude of defiance in students later on.

- According to Katz, parents should always talk directly with the teacher about the problem.
- Always check the facts with the teacher before jumping to any conclusions or assigning blame.

## Important Questions



You should be prepared with several questions for the teacher in order to get to the root of the problem. The Public School

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class regularly?" Parents should also inquire about the child's strengths and weaknesses, formal testing results and social habits 3. Remember that you have, so far, only been hearing your child's side of the story. The teacher may have reasonable insight on the situation and may have a reasonable solution. If you can come to no agreement, pursue a resolution through her supervisor--usually the school principal.

- You should be prepared with several questions for the teacher in order to get to the root of the problem.
- The Public School Parent's Network suggests parents ask questions like, "Is my child performing at his or her grade level?"
- "

## Conclusion

The key to a good relationship between teachers and parents is open communication. This prevents conflict from arising and makes resolutions a lot easier.

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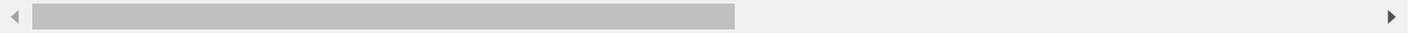
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