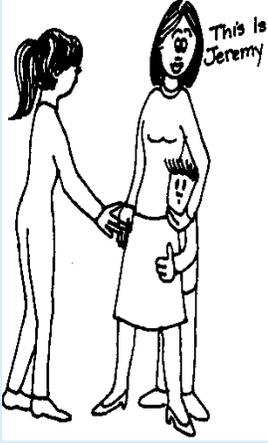


Cut it Out – Not So Shy!

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Do you have a child who gets excited about going places only to become withdrawn when he or she gets there? Do you or other people label your child shy? If you do, Cut it out! While there isn't much we can do about other people's reaction to our child, we can speak up for our child and rephrase that label to something more accurate, "Jeremy likes to take some time before jumping in." People can quickly misinterpret this behaviour as being rude, especially when it comes to manners.

Any label or negative attitude from an adult to a child regarding this trait can be harmful and keep him stuck. It is better that a child understands that it is okay to feel cautious and to be reassured that it is a matter of time and experience that will bring about a more comfortable feeling.

This kind of cautious approach can be seen when your child encounters new people and/or new places and/or even new things. While young kids will use their parents body as a magnet, older kids will often become irritable or experience stomach or headaches. Even a new toy or pair of running shoes can bring out a negative reaction, just because it is new! No, it doesn't mean they are spoiled; they just have to get over that initial negative reaction.

- give the slow-to-warm-up child time to warm up to new situations and allow gradual separation from you (within reason)
- let the child know that it is okay to need time to get used to a new person, place or thing and that the uncomfortable feeling will change
- discuss how things will look before you go there and have a reasonable expectation in place
- keep your anxiety in check and reassure your child that you have confidence in his ability to work through their discomfort
- appreciate the positive aspects of this trait, as cautious people are often intuitive, methodical and thoughtful

