

## **Personality and Birth-Order Theory**

Birth-order theory is a sociological and psychological concept that describes the tendency for people born into a particular birth order in a family (oldest, youngest, middle, or only child) to have certain personality traits. It is believed that because parents treat children in for each birth orders differently, children develop distinctively different personalities. It is found that children from within each group often share some common characteristics.

### **First Born Children**

First-borns are oriented toward their parents and often share their parents' sense of values. As a result, they may be more conservative or traditional than other children. First-borns especially strive to please their parents and often have high expectations for themselves and others. As children, they may be given responsibility over younger siblings, further developing a strong sense of responsibility and ethic. When they grow up, first born children often become high-achievers. They perform well in the academic, corporate, and professional fields. They often choose careers that require a high degree of precision such as law, medicine, or architecture, no gray area in work field, in control, often the boss or owner of company. Interestingly, more than half of all American presidents have been first born sons. (They may have had an older sister.)

### **Only Children**

Only children are extreme versions of first-born children. They receive undivided attention from parents throughout their lifetime, and can become selfish and dependent if their parents are over-indulgent. Like first-borns, only children also seek approval from their parents. However, fear of disappointing their parents can turn them into perfectionists who are well-organized but anxious. On the other hand, only children are mature and sensitive to adult needs. They are generally self-sufficient, appreciate their privacy, and enjoy high self-esteem. They tend toward the same professions as first-born children.

### **Middle Children**

Middle children generally look outside the family for approval and acceptance. As a result, they are less like the members of their own family. They may be less traditional and more independent. They often have improved social skills since they interact frequently with members outside their family. Middle children are quite often the most difficult children to both read and to raise. Middle children are quite often referred to as the "Mysterious Middle Child." While the personality traits of middle born children are more difficult to pin down, however they tend to be the opposite of their older sibling.

Middle children can listen well to others and diplomatically manage social situations. They tend to be peacemakers and get along well with others. Not surprisingly, middle children frequently assume managerial or leadership positions. They may choose careers that allow them to be creative such as sales, art, advertising, or a career that requires negotiating because of level headedness, and the ability to be unbiased.

### **Youngest Children**

The "babies" of the family often develop strategies to gain attention. They may act out in negative ways, behaving immature or acting self-centered, or in positive ways, being affectionate, empathetic and caring. Last-borns can be playful, charming, or manipulative. Last-borns frequently experience the most independence from family pressures. They tend to be creative and carefree. This may be due to their parents' increasingly relaxed attitudes toward family rules. With each successive child, parents worry less about rearing children "perfectly." Careers in the arts, entertainment, or sales are good matches for the free spirits of last-born personalities.

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What are some traits of your birth order? Read your assigned section of the article and fill in at least 4 traits given in the article and 2 sample professions under your birth order below.

First Born Traits	Middle Child Traits	Last Born Traits	Only Child Traits
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Typical Professions	Typical Professions	Typical Professions	Typical Professions
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____