

Planetary qualities in child development: an independent research study

A detailed exploration of the planetary qualities as they manifest in the six stages identified by the Gesell Institute research

Brief descriptions of the planetary qualities

A quick reference for the qualities of each mature planetary type

This guide is provided for a deeper understanding of what the experience of each Gesell Stage in childhood may ultimately provide for well-rounded development of each child in the light of planetary qualities.

Introduction

The Gesell Institute of Child Development has observed that children go through a repeating sequence of six different stages, with predictable changes in mood and behaviour in each.¹ In tradition and in psychology there are many ways of characterizing personality or natural disposition which could be used to examine the behavioural tendencies which Gesell describes in each stage—for example with the four temperaments from classical times, introversion-extroversion scales or Myers Briggs type indicator (MBTI). However the behavioural tendencies observed in these stages clearly reflect the archetypal gestures or personality types associated in tradition with the planets and their ‘planetary qualities’. In particular six Gesell Stages reflect the qualities associated with the six heavenly bodies nearest to earth, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The seventh heavenly body in this series is the Sun which works through all the other six.

Brief descriptions of these planetary qualities as they manifest in the six ‘planetary types’ in human personality are provided below. From this one can see what a broad spectrum of experience is offered to children as they have the opportunity to experience these many ways of living in the world, again and again, throughout childhood—more extroverted, more introverted, more socially oriented, more action oriented, broad thinkers, deep thinkers, conservative or adventurous.

More detailed descriptions of these planetary types can be found in the essays on the individual planets in *Planetary qualities in child development*. It is hoped that these can provide a better understanding of where the planetary qualities can be seen in each Gesell stage and also reveal the richness of experience given by these different planetary qualities to each

¹ The Gesell Institute of Child Development carried out detailed observations of children from Birth to Sixteen years. They observed that children went through predictable changes in ‘mood’ or ‘tendency’ in different stages, where behaviour seem to alternate between being in equilibrium and in dis-equilibrium. Some stages were more expansive, some more inward, some more amenable, some outright challenging! They identified six stages in a cycle which was repeated throughout childhood, with the stages increasing in length incrementally through the first seven years when the stages became one year in length. . More about the Gesell Institute, their research and how they discovered these stages is described separately in the essay *The Gesell Institute for Child Development and the Six Gesell Stages in Child Development*. They identified the stages in their book: Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L., Bates Ames, Louise *The Child from Five to Ten* (Harper & Row, New York 1977 p.47

child in growing up.

Saturn qualities

Saturn qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 6 in child development and begin with birth, then occur at 32 to 40 weeks, 21 to 24 months, 4 ½ to 5 years, 9 years, 15 years, and extrapolated from these, 21 years. In the larger biographical rhythms in life, Saturn is associated with the years 56 to 63.

Some qualities of the mature Saturn type: Saturn stands at both the end and the beginning of a cycle, just as the seed in the plant does; it is the culmination of the growing process and provides the link with a new beginning, birth. The Saturn types are seen to have a strong inner life, a strong sense of self and independence; they are motivated by their need for freedom. They may be very self-contained and private, content at times to remain within their own sphere. They can be deeply feeling and sensitive though they do not readily reveal what is going on inside them. Saturn influences are associated with contraction and restriction, which in the Saturn type manifest as prudence, conservatism, stability, common sense, understanding of structure and good organizational ability. They are serious, ordered, reflective and have a logical, investigative mentality; their quality of concentration enables intellectual depth and deep insights; they seek the essence, the truth and structure. They have a determined will and show perseverance, persistence, and the capacity for self-denial and self-restraint. Saturn is associated with the maturity of later life. Saturn influences are also strongly associated with deeper connection with oneself as an individual and one's personal destiny.

More detailed descriptions on Saturn can be found in the essay *Saturn qualities in child development*.

Moon qualities

Moon qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 1 in child development and begin with 4 to 6 weeks, then occur at 40 to 44 weeks, 2 years (24 to 30 months), 5 to 5 ½ years, 10 years and 16 years.

Some qualities of the mature Moon type: The Moon type is associated with youthful forces and can be intuitive, impressionable, receptive, adaptable and able to live in the present. The Moon is also associated with the feminine principle so it is not surprising that the Moon type are motivated by love, and that relationships are important to them; they need to nurture and protect others. They are amenable, sympathetic, sociable, kind and non-confrontational. Their thinking is broad and factual, rather than deep, and while some can be somewhat dreamily creative and imaginative, others can be more dryly intellectual, conventional or encyclopaedic in their knowledge. Their challenge is to be strong enough to be authentically themselves, not just what others would like them to be. They tend toward a phlegmatic temperament. The gift of the Moon qualities with maturity is that they allow circumspection, a quiet contemplative attitude to life and a thoughtfulness which prevents imprudent actions and words.

More detailed descriptions on Moon can be found in the essay *Moon qualities in child development*.

Mercury qualities

Mercury qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 2 in child development and begin with 6-8 to 12 weeks, 44-48 to 52 weeks, 2 ½ to 3 years, 5 ½ to 6+ years and 11 years. Extrapolated from these, the sixth Gesell Stage 2 would be 17 years.

Some qualities of the mature Mercury type: The Mercury type has all the gifts of youth: vigour, sanguinity, energy, quick intelligence and enthusiasm for new ideas. They are motivated most by freedom. They are frustrated by stuck-ness, rigidity and lack of movement for their own thinking is quick, sharp, innovative, and flexible. Their need for movement and flexibility includes a capacity to cope with chaos and confusion, (and perhaps create it) better than most. They use their thinking to work in and deal with the world; they weave and manoeuvre; they camouflage with humour; they are perceptive and astute. They are sanguine in temperament, as well as adaptable, communicative and witty, with a charming sociability which lets them get away with more than other people might. They help keep community life going. Their strength of will is for the present, not for a prolonged period.

More detailed descriptions on Mercury can be found in the essay *Mercury qualities in child development*.

Venus qualities

Venus qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 3 in child development and begin with 16 to 20 weeks, 52-56 weeks to 1 year 3 months, 3 to 3 ½ years, 6 ½ to 7 years and 12 years. Extrapolated from these the sixth Stage 3 would be 18 years.

Some qualities of the mature Venus type: Venus is traditionally associated with love, beauty, harmony and the feminine aspect of ourselves. These and the value the Venus types put on good personal relationships are reflected in their personal qualities: cooperation, sympathy, compromise, as well as cheerfulness, amicableness, kindness, compassion and sociability. They are deeply committed to the care and nurture of others; they prepare the space and support others in the background, rather than lead from the front. They live through their feelings, in both sympathy and antipathy, love and hate. They can be warm, gentle and tactful but they can also be so placid and amenable that they can lose their sense of themselves and of their own needs. Their thinking is also feeling imbued, but is practical and in the present. Their will is flexible with others but persevering on the tasks that need doing. They have a deep need for beauty in all its manifestations: artistic, in nature, in sensual experiences, in the human and built environment. Venus is also associated eroticism.

More detailed descriptions on Venus can be found in the essay *Venus qualities in child development*.

Mars qualities

Mars qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 4 in child development and begin with 20 weeks, 15 months 3½ years, 7 years, 13 years, and, extrapolated from these, 19 years.

Some qualities of the mature Mars type: Mars types are seen to be enthusiastic, passionate, positive people, who actively take the initiative and assert their strong will to act and get things moving. Their inner motivation is power, which they use to lead, organize, serve and protect others. They are practical thinkers who work in the present in a task-oriented, rather than a people-oriented, way. They work out of their feelings and need to feel a personal

connection with what they do. They need action but also time for inner gathering, preparation and digestion of experience—their earnest, intense drive is also used inwardly in assimilating experiences. When their intentions are blocked, they tend to withdraw. They have a choleric melancholic temperament which reflects this outward and inward movement. Mars is associated with the masculine aspect of ourselves.

More detailed descriptions on Mars can be found in the essay *Mars qualities in child development*.

Jupiter qualities

Jupiter qualities are associated with Gesell Stage 5 in child development and begin with 24-28 to 32 weeks, 18 to 21 months, Four to Four-and-a-half, Eight years, 14 years and, extrapolated, 20 years.

Some qualities of the mature Jupiter type: The Jupiter type is large in personality, in charisma and in dignity. They are motivated by power, over themselves and to do what they see needs doing for they have an expansive overview of things. Others tend to defer to them as openhearted, trustworthy authorities and people with wisdom. Their wisdom is wide and deep, more mature and more conscious; they are truth seekers and they seek high ideals. Their ability to discriminate, order and prioritize makes them good organizers, effective leaders and gives strength to override their feelings to get a task done. Their will is strong and for the long term, and when working towards a goal, they work logically, rationally, quietly and determinedly. They tend to be task and ideal driven rather than giving priority to relationships but they are versatile and competent in many ways. Jupiter is associated with giving form to things, big gestures and athleticism.

More detailed descriptions on Jupiter can be found in the essay *Jupiter qualities in child development*.