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A CHILD AT A TIME

Understanding Temperament

LORAINÉ D. COOK

Children are not empty canvases awaiting adult input; rather, they come into the world with inherent traits encoded in their DNA. As they develop, these unique characteristics gradually reveal themselves. In *A Child at a Time: Understanding Temperament*, Loraine D. Cook explains the importance of teachers and parents understanding a child's unique characteristics (their temperament), reflected in their behaviour and reaction styles. The author questions the conventional one-size-fits-all approach to education to which many educators and parents adhere. By exploring the concepts of a poorness-of-fit and a goodness-of-fit environment, Cook illustrates how a child's surroundings can influence the expression of their temperament.

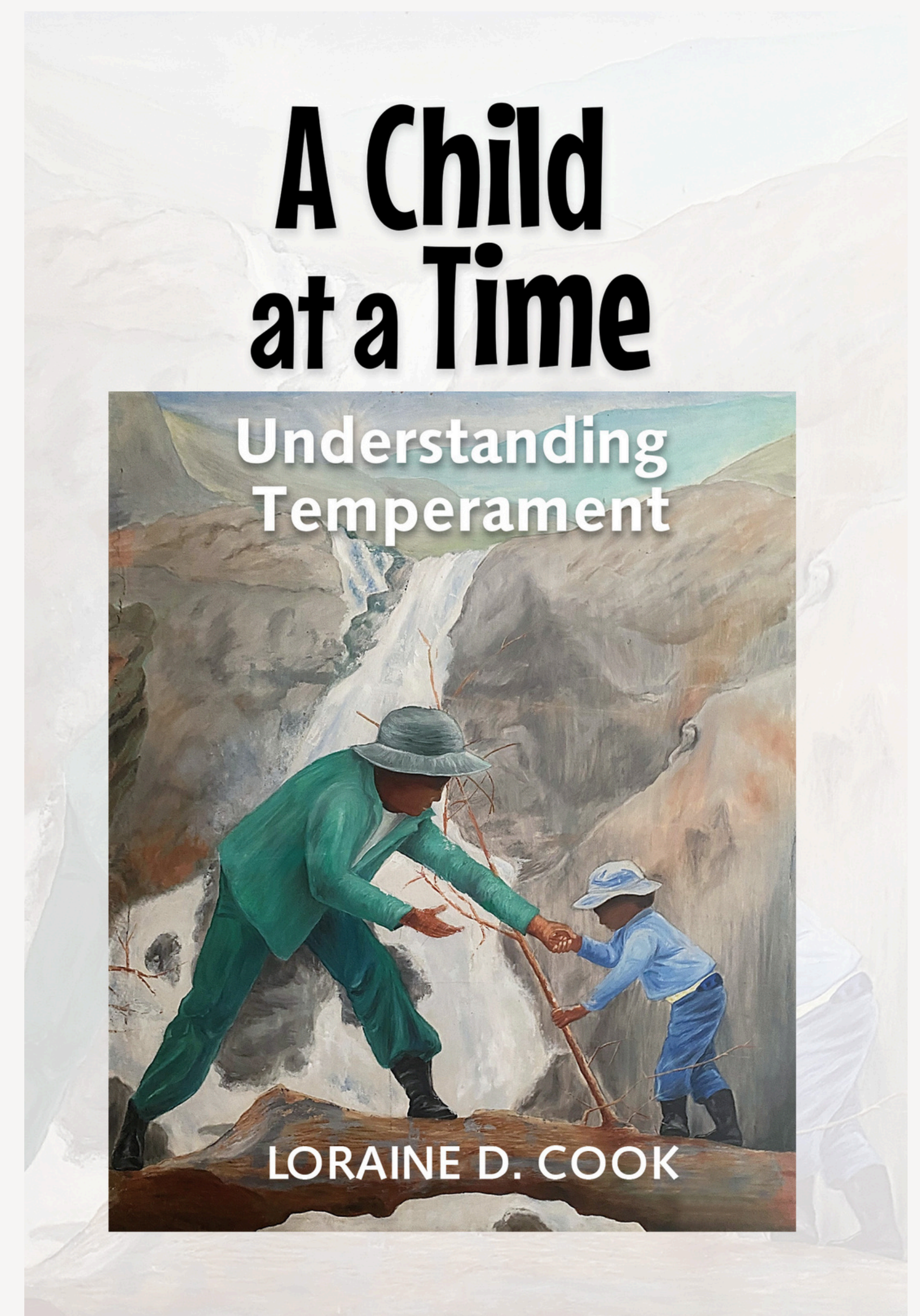
Over several chapters, the author discusses parents' and teachers' interactions with their children and how such interactions can affect the quality of the home and school environments in which children develop. These interactions are influenced not only by the temperament of the children but also by the characteristics of the adults involved. If adults fail to account for temperament in managing children's behaviours, then the nurturing environment for children in the home and the classroom may be inundated with frustrated parents, teachers and children, potentially compromising children's social, emotional and academic growth. By helping parents and teachers understand children's behavioural patterns, adults can develop a more holistic environment conducive to their children's well-being.

In the book's concluding chapters, Cook discusses the INSIGHTS programme, which is rooted in temperament theories, and its outcomes in Jamaica. This programme offers customized behaviour-management strategies for parents and teachers based on children's temperaments and emphasizes early intervention by teaching conflict-management skills to children as young as five.

A Child at a Time is a call to educators, parents and policymakers that children's individual differences are important, particularly in their formative years. By reading this book, parents and educators can gain valuable insights into children's behaviours and reactions, thereby improving their approach to behaviour management.



Loraine D. Cook is a professor of educational psychology and lectures in research methods and educational psychology at the School of Education (Mona), University of the West Indies. She is a founding co-chief editor of the *Caribbean Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. She received the Fulbright Visiting Researcher Award in 2011.



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