

What First Impression Will Your Child's Name Create?

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When we pick a child's name, parents-to-be consider many factors from potential namesakes to a name's popularity. We think about how the first name will sound with the last name and what nicknames might ensue: Emerson = Emmy, Abigail = Abby, Jacob = Jake.

But should we also think about the first impression the name will create? One [study](#) showed that children with desirable names (Karen, Lisa, David, and Michael) received higher grades than children with undesirable names (Bertha, Adelle, Hubert, and Elmer) when near-identical papers were submitted to the same teachers for grading.

In [Freakonomics](#), authors Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner discuss the impact of a child's first name, particularly a distinctively black name. [Read an excerpt here on slate.com](#). They found that children with distinctively black names fare worse in life, but it's not because of their names. It's because of the poorer economic circumstances in which children with distinctively black names tend to grow up in.

So which is it? Does our name affect our personality and likelihood of success or not? If we look to books for answers we will find that yes indeed, a name does create a good or bad first impression. [The Baby Name Survey](#), by Bruce Lansky, is a book entirely devoted to answering the question: What impression will your baby's name make? I looked up my name, Laurie, and found that "everyone wants Laurie as a best friend. Most people say she is a fun, bubbly girl with lots of energy and smiles.... Then again, a few people see her as shy, insecure wallflower."

Whatever, I think Laurie is a great name.

I don't care what anyone else thinks. But then again, I must admit that I do have my own stereotypes. My husband and I picked the name Blake for our son because we liked the name and we both thought we'd want to be friends with someone named Blake. I have no idea why we thought Blake was a friendly name, but as it turns out, our son is very warm and engaging with new people.

How did you pick your child's name? Did you think about the first impression the name would create? Is it wrong to consider stereotypes?

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