



Baby behavior: understanding your baby's cues

Self-learning activity

Do you find it hard to know what your baby needs?

Do you want to know how to help your baby be calm and happy?

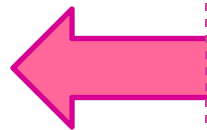
Thankfully, babies have cues that show parents what they need. Looking for cues can make it easier for you to help your baby be calm and happy!

I want to be near you!

“Near you” cues are things your baby does to let you know he wants to be with you.

Here are some things your baby might do to tell you he is ready to interact with you:

- ◆ Stare at your face
- ◆ Root or make sucking motions
- ◆ Make feeding sounds
- ◆ Smile
- ◆ Have a relaxed face and body
- ◆ Follow your voice and face
- ◆ Raise his head



Activity: Circle all the “near you” cues your baby shows.

Some cues are very obvious, but others may be harder to notice.

Activity: What is the baby in this picture telling you?

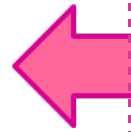


I need something to be different!

“I need something to be different” cues are things your baby does to show you that she needs your help to be comfortable.

Here are some things your baby might do to tell you she needs something to be different.

- ◆ Looking, turning, or arching her back away
- ◆ Extending her fingers with a stiff hand
- ◆ Falling asleep
- ◆ Frowning or having a glazed look
- ◆ Yawning



Activity: Circle all the “something different” cues your baby shows.

Your baby may cry when she needs something to be different, but she will show you other cues first. Noticing cues quickly may prevent your baby from crying.

Activity: What is the baby in this picture telling you?



Tips for parents

When you see cues that your baby is ready to be near you, you could:

- ◆ Interact and play with your baby. This is the best time for a baby to learn, play, and feed.
- ◆ Keep in mind that learning is hard work. Babies can get tired very quickly.

When you notice that your baby needs something to be different:

- ◆ Let your baby turn away. Quiet time is good for both of you!
- ◆ Change the environment. A lot of noise or crowds of people can be very tiring for your baby.
- ◆ Stop interactions. Sometimes even siblings can be too much for your baby to handle.