



How Does Baby Do It?

Learning to Understand Your Baby's Cues and Clues



Everyday your baby tells you about his or her likes and dislikes. When you understand what your baby is telling you, you can better meet your baby's needs. Use this worksheet to learn more about the cues and clues your baby sends you by describing your baby's likes and dislikes on the left. On the right, describe what your baby does that communicates this to you.

These are my baby's likes and dislikes when...

My baby shows and tells me this by...

...being fed

likes... _____

dislikes... _____

...being fussy

likes... _____

dislikes... _____

... being quiet and alert

likes... _____

dislikes... _____

...sleepy

likes... _____

dislikes... _____

Ideas for Thinking about Your Baby's Cues and Clues

- Remember that your baby is an individual person with unique and special ways of behaving and communicating.
- Understanding your baby's individual characteristics can help you adapt your parenting to meet his or her needs.
- Even when your baby's behavior is challenging—for example when your baby is difficult to soothe—it can be an opportunity to learn about yourself and your baby.
- The more you know about your baby's individual communication style, the more responsive you can be to your baby, helping you and your baby feel more connected.



Baby-Friendly HOME



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Planning for a safety and exploration...



By setting up your home using the recommendations below, you'll make your home a place where your baby can safely explore, discover, and learn about the world.

Although some of the recommendations aren't necessary before your baby is mobile, you're sure to prevent accidents and injuries if you get an early start setting them up.

The First YEAR

Try to get an early start on making your home safe and baby-friendly. The first year flies by, and before you know it, your baby will be mobile and moving around the house.



Bathroom...

- ☐ Place non-slip surface in the bathtub or shower.
- ☐ Store medicine and cleaning products in original containers, in locked cabinet and out of reach.
- ☐ Set hot water heater temperature at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.
- ☐ Remove all frequently used products such as toothpaste, shampoo, razors, etc., from countertops or edges of tubs. Secure products in a high cabinet with a safety latch.
- ☐ Unplug all electrical appliances and keep them away from water.
- ☐ Never leave child alone in the bath, even for a moment. Take baby with you in a towel if you must answer the door or phone, or buy a cordless phone for use in the bathroom.
- ☐ Keep toilet lid closed and install a safety latch on the lid.

Kitchen...

- ☐ Use a baby gate to prevent baby from entering when you are not in the kitchen.
- ☐ Store bleach, laundry and dish soap, and other potential poisons in original containers in locked cabinets out of baby's reach.
- ☐ Keep knives, forks, scissors, and other sharp instruments in a latched drawer separate from "safe" kitchen utensils.
- ☐ Unplug appliances when they are not in use and be sure cords are not hanging down. Watch closely when appliances are in use.
- ☐ With gas stoves, turn dial to off position and remove knobs if possible. Otherwise block access to stove as much as possible.
- ☐ Turn pot handles on the stove toward the back. Use only back burners.
- ☐ Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen. (Keep one on each floor, if more than a one-story house.)
- ☐ Keep pet food and water out of reach of the baby.

Living Room and Bedrooms...

- ☐ Install smoke detectors. Check monthly to be sure they are working. Change the batteries annually.
- ☐ Put safety plugs in all unused electrical outlets.
- ☐ Install safety gates at top and bottom of stairs. Avoid accordion-style gates as they can trap an arm or a neck. Those with horizontal slats 2-3/8 inches apart are better.

Parenting STYLES



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What the research tells us...



Research shows that babies benefit tremendously from playing with both parents, and that having both parents actively involved in caring for them fosters healthy development.

Findings from One STUDY...

Babies learn to expect different kinds of interactions with each parent. In one study, researchers found that babies often relax when mom reaches for them.

When dad reaches for them, they get ready to be stimulated.

Babies benefit from having their parents respond to them in different ways, so mix it up a little. It will be good for your baby, and more fun for you.



Understanding styles...

- Mothers and fathers often play differently with their babies.
- Fathers tend to engage in more rough-and-tumble play than moms do. For example, fathers might let their babies crawl all over them while they lie on the floor.
- Moms tend to play more cuddle games, like finger plays or blowing kisses on the belly.
- Dads tend to encourage their babies to solve their own problems.
- Moms tend to move in to help sooner when their babies show signs of frustration.

Encouraging benefits for baby...

- Remember, babies benefit from having their parents respond to them in different ways. Here are some tips for maximizing this benefit:
 - Notice the types of play you prefer. How would you define your style?
 - How is your style different than your co-parent's style?
 - How much time do you spend playing with your baby? How does this compare to the amount of time your co-parent or partner plays with your baby?
 - Try on your co-parent or partner's play style as an experiment. Switch off from time to time so that your baby experiences each of you in different ways. When you do, your relationship with your baby will grow and change.

When Style Differences Cause Tension

Sometimes different styles can be a source of tension. For example, if one parent starts a game of rough-and-tumble play just when the other parent is planning for bedtime, it might put some strain on the relationship. When these differences show up at inconvenient times, keep in mind the developmental benefits for your baby of interacting with each of you in different ways. Talk openly with your partner and keep your sense of humor. Use the problem-solving process in the upcoming Family Affairs to help you understand and appreciate each others' styles and make things work for everyone.



Partners in Parenting: We Have Important Things to Say

Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of a busy, sleep-deprived life focused on the needs of a baby, it's easy to let communication with your partner or other important people in your life slide. Use this worksheet to help you and your partner communicate and understand each other's thoughts and feelings.



1. Choose one of the topics below to discuss, or add one of your own if necessary.

- ___ What I miss most in my life right now.
- ___ The best things my partner and others are doing to support me right now.
- ___ Ways I wish I could get more support.
- ___ How I am feeling confused about my role as a parent.
- ___ How I am feeling confused about my role as a partner.
- ___ Something I would like to do this week to help myself relax or enjoy my adult relationships more.
- ___ Other _____

2. My thoughts and feelings on the topic:

3. What I want to say about my thoughts and feelings:

Ideas for Talking: Making the Conversation Go Well

- Keep the conversation focused on one topic. You can discuss other topics at another time.
- Use "I" statements by talking about the situation, how you feel, and what you need, rather than about what your partner is doing wrong or not doing right.
- Be specific about what you need and how you'd like the situation to change, rather than focusing on how you want your partner to change.
- Say positive things about the good things that are happening.
- Stay focused on strengths and solutions.
- Identify what's good and what works and how to make it happen more often.
- Notice your recurring negative or upsetting thoughts as a way to get a little distance from them.
- Focus on your goals for the conversation rather than reacting automatically in response to your distressing thoughts or feelings.



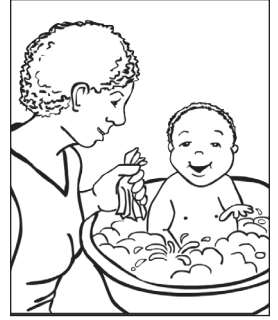
Keeping these ideas in mind, practice what you will say to your partner.



Responsive Routines

Daily Rhythm & Fun That Works for You & Your Baby

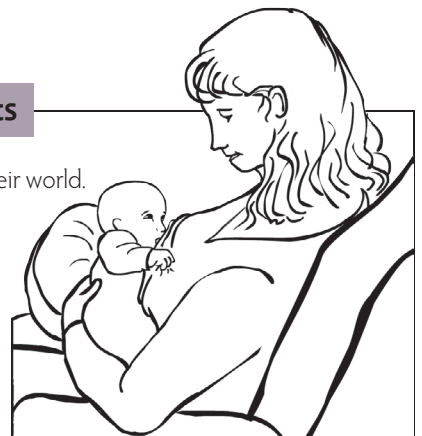
Settling into a simple routine with your baby helps reduce daily hassles and creates more time for shared fun. It also helps your baby learn what to expect. For example, naptime or bedtime can begin with enjoyable activities, like a bath and a story. Then, a hug or snuggle will be a perfect way to send your baby off to sleepyland. Use this worksheet to develop a responsive routine for you, your baby, and for your family life.



1. Choose a daily activity, such as bedtime, bathtime, playtime, or feeding time that you would like to build a routine around. Describe what you would like to have happen during this routine, as well as when and where it should occur.
2. How will your baby benefit from this routine?
3. How will this routine help you and your family life?
4. Balancing out daily routine activities with new experiences is important for your baby's growth and development. Describe a new special activity that you would like to try with your baby to add fun to your life with your baby.

Why Routines and Rhythm Are Good for Infants

- The rhythm and predictability of routines help babies feel secure and more confident about exploring their world.
- Establishing routines in the first year lays a healthy foundation for common challenges that parents face in the second year when babies become more mobile.
- Routines foster babies' brain development by:
 - helping children develop concepts of pattern and predictability.
 - ensuring that babies and parents engage in activities, like playing and communicating, that promote important connections in the baby's brain.





The Learning Family



The first year—wow! So much to learn. And the fact is, everybody is new at this—the baby, you as a parent, as a parenting couple, and all of you as a family. We parents can feel clumsy and sometimes downright incompetent as we're learning. Being on each other's side, having compassion for each other as we make mistakes, and laughing together can help when we feel awkward in these new situations. Just think of yourself as a learning family, and you'll be fine.

1. Think about a time when you learned something new in a class, on the job, or as a hobby or sport. Describe some things about the learning experience that were helpful for you (e.g., the teacher was patient), and some things were not so helpful (e.g., you didn't have enough time to practice).

2. Good learning experiences often have common characteristics. Put a check in front of the ones below that work well for you when you are learning something new, and add some on the blank lines if you wish.

___ *I am able to learn at my own pace.*

___ *I am respected.*

___ *I am given good information.*

___ *I am listened to.*

___ *I am shown how to do things.*

___ *I am not afraid to make mistakes.*

___ *I am allowed to practice as much as I need to.*

___ _____

___ *My teacher is encouraging and supportive.*

___ _____

3. As new parents with a baby, now everyone in your family is learning. You are a learning, growing, changing family! Describe how you can apply what you wrote in #1 and #2 above to your new family life. For example, if one of you is now taking over an unfamiliar task (e.g., Dad is doing the laundry for the first time), how can the two of you make it a good learning experience for everyone?

— — — — — Clip below and post on your fridge. — — — — —

Our Plan for Working Together as a Learning Family

- We will respect and accept each other. ■ We will listen to each other. ■ We will be patient and help each other out.
- We will share what we learn with each other. ■ We will find routines that work for everyone.
- We will encourage each other and show appreciation by doing things like giving pats on the back.
- We will accept that there will be setbacks, problems, and challenges from time to time.
- We will move forward even when there are challenges or difficult thoughts and feelings.
- We will be patient, breathe deeply, focus on being a learning family, and keep our sense of humor.
- We will have fun together!



Building a Support NETWORK



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You are not alone...



In earlier generations, relatives often lived close to each other. Members of these larger extended families helped new parents "learn the ropes," offered support, and provided tender loving care. Now many grand-parents and other relatives who would like to help can't because they work full-time or don't live close to the new parents.

As a new parent, you might find yourself struggling simply because you're running on empty. That's where your support network can help.

Building a support network will...

- Help you stay connected to family, friends, and resources.
- Provide people to turn to when you need help.
- Ensure that you feel understood and supported, in both the good and the challenging times.

Tips for building a support network with parents...

- In the **New Parents' Survival GUIDE** you learned that building a support network with other parents can help you realize that you are not alone, and that a support network can be a good place to get ideas for fun activities and ways to handle stressful or difficult situations. Build your network by:
- Joining a parenting group in your community. Ask your pediatrician for help locating a group, if necessary.
- Visiting online communities where parents discuss their questions, challenges and joys.
- Spending time with other parents of infants you meet. Seek them out for walks with your babies, small playgroups, or coffee while the babies sleep.
- Offering to trade infant-care time with another parent to give each other a break. Plan time before or after to chat and share stories.

Tips for building a support network with family, friends, and care providers...

- Staying connected to people you are already close to and building new relationships will help you thrive and weather the ups and downs of your new role as a parent. Build your network by:
- Asking for help and support when you need it.
- Calling friends and family regularly to touch base. Remember to talk with them about what is happening in their lives.
- Planning for regular contact with other adults, especially if you're home alone all day with the baby.
- Asking trusted friends, family, and health-care providers for referrals to childcare services, and other resources you might need.

Build a Support Network ONLINE

Visit the Incredible Infants Online Web discussion forum to meet and get support from other parents who are experiencing some of the same joys, frustrations and challenges that you are.

Share your ideas and experiences and try out ideas that other people share.

Whatever you do, though, don't go it alone. There are people online and in your community who can help.



Choosing **CHILDCARE**



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Good for you and good for your baby...



Families have different childcare needs. Even if you haven't begun to think about leaving your baby in someone else's care, you can start thinking about the childcare qualities that are important to you. Whether it's Grandma or a day-care center taking care of your baby, you want to know our baby is in good hands. Use the information below to guide your choices as you set up childcare for your baby.

Keep your needs and your baby's needs in mind.

Families have different childcare needs. Your baby's temperament, your values, your financial situation, and the availability of other family members to provide good childcare all contribute to your choice of care. In addition, you might need full-time childcare, part-time care, or only occasionally care. All these issues will affect your childcare choices.



Safety & Cleanliness...

- Diaper changing area is separate from food handling and eating areas.
- Sharp corners are padded, outlets are covered, baby gates block stairs and other off-limits areas, and choking-hazard objects are out of reach.
- Sleeping areas are safe with cribs that meet current safety specifications and do not include pillows, or blankets that pose a choking hazard.
- Babies are put down for naps on their back.

Caregiver Interaction...

- Look for continuity of care from a primary caregiver so your baby will feel secure and develop trust.
- Look for caregivers who show affection and responsiveness by:
 - holding, rocking, and cuddling the babies in their care.
 - responding to smiles and crying, and seeking eye contact with babies they interact with.
 - talking and singing to babies, and responding to their vocalizations.
 - playing with babies, and supporting their explorations and interests.
- Look for caregivers who don't try to fit babies into a rigid schedule and who show respect for each individual baby's needs and rhythms for eating, sleeping, playing, social interaction and quiet time.

The Environment...

- Look for a stimulating, baby-friendly environment where babies:
 - can explore safely indoors and out, and interact with toys, books, and safe household objects.
 - have age-appropriate time on the floor, being upright, being held, and sitting in highchairs and bouncy seats.
- Look for an environment that provides babies with opportunities to interact and socialize with adults, and with other babies and children.
- Choose a childcare option where infants are in an appropriate infant-group size (six infants) and where there is an appropriate caregiver/infant ratio (1:3).

Parent/Caregiver Relationships...

- Look for a childcare arrangement where you are welcome to drop in at anytime, and where you feel comfortable asking questions and making suggestions.
- Choose a caregiver who is sensitive to your values, culture, and child rearing practices, and who shares information freely about your baby's day and experiences.
- If you are breast feeding, look for a childcare provider who supports breast feeding by mothers while their babies are in childcare.

Fun & Games: Play Is Baby's Brain FOOD

Parenting Now!



Incredible INFANTS Online®

**Billions of brain cells...
Trillions of connections...**



You can't see it happen, but your baby's brain is growing every day. Even though brain development continues into adulthood, the greatest proportion of brain development occurs early in life. By the age of three, your baby will have grown billions of brain cells and hundreds of trillions of brain cell connections. Brain development is fostered when babies see, hear, touch and interact with their physical and social environments. And what better way for babies to use their senses to interact with these exciting new environments than through play?

Everyday PLAY

You can encourage healthy development by playing with your baby everyday in ways that stimulate his senses and provide opportunities for motor development.

After all, play is just another word for babies' brain food!



Stimulate hearing by...

- Exposing your baby to your voice and other human voices.
- Exposing her to natural and man-made sounds in the environment.
- Singing to your baby.
- Listening to music with her, and listening to more variety with her as she gets older.

Stimulate vision by...

- Looking at objects and images with your baby that have interesting colors and patterns.
- Exposing your young infant to objects and images with simple, bold, black-and-white patterns.
- Exposing your older baby to objects and images with more complex and colorful visual patterns.

Stimulate touch by...

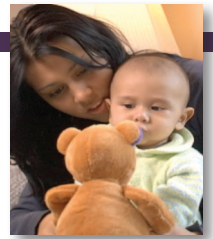
- Giving your baby safe objects to explore that have different textures, and rubbing the objects on his skin, then reacting with a facial expression.

Stimulate motor development by...

- Moving with your baby to music.
- Moving with your baby while playing, and playing movement games with your baby like peek-a-boo.
- Dancing to music with your older baby, and encouraging him to dance alone when he's ready.
- Giving your baby lots of "floor" time and opportunities to reach, stretch and move to balance less active time.

Stimulate language development by...

- Talking with your baby during your daily activities, and describing objects and actions as you play with your baby.
- Responding to your young baby's vocalizations and expressions.
- Giving your older baby opportunities to fill his part of the conversation.



Worries are normal for new parents...



New-parent worries are common, but worrying can make you anxious and affect your experience as a parent. Don't let worries make you overly anxious, or cause you to lose your joy in being a parent, or push your baby to do more than she or he is ready to do.

The trick with worry is to trick it! Use The Worry TRICK procedure to turn your worry into wonderful feelings.

Common worries parents might express...

- Something might happen to my baby or something might be wrong with my baby:
 - My baby might become seriously ill.
 - My baby might be injured or harmed physically.
 - My baby might not develop properly or meet developmental milestones.
 - My baby seems to be behind other babies in her development.
 - My baby seems different than other babies.
- I might not be able to parent properly:
 - I might become ill and unable to care for my baby.
 - I might be injured and unable to care for my baby.
 - I might make a terrible mistake in how I handle or interact with my baby.

Ways to counteract worries...

- Don't fight your worries. They're just a sign of how much you care.
- Tell yourself that your worries are normal and then move beyond them. (Babies can tell when you're anxious.)
- Remember that each baby is unique and develops on a unique timetable.
- Relax, breathe and follow your baby's lead, and you will see how wonderful and unique your baby is.
- Let your baby know that you think he or she is wonderful.

When Worries Won't Go Away

Sometimes worries about your own health or your baby's development do not subside with time, or you are concerned that there might be a real concern or problem.

Whether you're concerned about post-partum depression, your baby's development or health, or other issues, the best person to contact initially is your pediatrician. She or he can help you sort out what is going on, and provide treatment or a referral if needed.

The Worry TRICK

- Get comfortable, relax, and close your eyes.
- Close your eyes.
- Imagine your love for your baby, and your desire to protect her.
- Create a picture in your mind of what that love and protection might look like (e.g., a soft blanket, warm sunshine).
- Imagine surrounding your baby in that protection.
- Whenever you start to worry, imagine the image of your baby wrapped up completely safe in your love.



Sleep Like a BABY



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Learning about sleep patterns...



Learning more about babies' sleep patterns will help you decide if and how to encourage a change in your baby's patterns. If your baby is up a lot at night and you don't mind, then no change is needed. If you're exhausted, angry, or resentful, though, a change might be a good idea.

Most babies will be sleeping soundly through the night in a matter of months, not years. Having realistic expectations during these first months will help keep you from feeling frustrated or doubting yourself.

Tips for PARENTS

- Take naps during the day while baby sleeps.
- Get organized with nighttime baby-feeding supplies.
- Take turns sleeping away from baby while your co-parent gets up.
- Exercise during the day so you sleep well.
- Listen to soothing music when your baby is fussy.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish.
- Ask for help.



Sleep patterns 0 to 6 months...

- **Duration:** Babies one week to one month old sleep about 16 out of 24 hours a day.
- **Night Sleep:** Before they're four months old, babies don't sleep through the night because their sleep is divided into two- or three-hour periods.
- **Consistency:** From birth to three months old, babies' sleep patterns can change from day to day. Frustrating? Yes! But remember, it will only last a few months.
- **Active Sleep:** From birth to six months, babies spend about half their time in active sleep, often moving around, sucking, fluttering their eyelids, or startling. In active sleep, babies less than four to six months old wake up easily and often need help getting back to sleep because they haven't learned how to soothe themselves yet.
- **Sleep Cycles:** Babies less than six months old have twice as many light sleep cycles as adults, and sometimes have difficulty moving from a light to a deep sleep state.

Sleeping from 6 to 12 months...

- **Sleeping Cycles:** Babies continue to have cycles of lighter and deeper sleep but sleep less during the day.
- **Waking and Soothing:** Babies learn to soothe themselves back to sleep and their sleep begins to lengthen.
- **Encouraging Sleep:** Babies' abilities to put themselves back to sleep will vary, but parents can encourage healthy sleep patterns by:
 - Finding and consistently using a comfortable sleep location.
 - Following a regular sleep routine.
 - Creating a calming sleep setting with soothing sounds and low light.
 - Giving your baby a comfort object to help him soothe himself.
 - Letting your baby fall asleep in her crib rather than in your arms.
 - Helping your baby—if he or she has had enough to eat—get back to sleep without being fed by holding, rocking, and singing.

New Parents' SURVIVAL GUIDE



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Taking care of baby means taking care of yourself



One of the best things you can do to help your baby grow and thrive is to take care of yourself. Staying healthy physically, learning how to deal with stress, making time for yourself, and having good relationships with friends and family members will help you survive—and thrive—during your baby's first year.

Nurture yourself...

- **Physically:** Find a way to get the sleep and rest your body needs; fuel your body with a healthy diet and maybe vitamin supplements; energize yourself with physical activity.
- **With breaks:** Make an enjoyable activity, like a short break to read or daydream, part of your daily routine; take some time alone or with your partner for adult activities without baby.

Build a support network...

- **With other parents:** Find out you are not alone, that other parents share your struggles, joys and worries; get ideas for fun activities and handling stressful or difficult situations by talking with, and observing, other parents.
- **With friends, family and care providers:** Stay connected to people you are already close to; don't be afraid to ask for help and support; plan for regular contact with adults, especially if you're home alone all day with the baby; find babysitters or daycare providers you trust so you are comfortable when you are away from your baby.

Experience the positive side of parenting by...

- **Expressing yourself:** Allow yourself to feel and voice things that are difficult or stressful; instead of hiding or brooding about problems, free up your energy by dealing with them constructively.
- **Letting go of difficult feelings:** Write your unpleasant feelings and thoughts in a journal and share them with a trusted friend or other parents who are going through the same things you are.
- **Focusing consciously on the positive!** Remind yourself daily of four things you love about your baby and about being a parent.

Gain control over your time by ...

- **Building some structure into your day:** Plan some of your activities for the next day the night before; try to plan at least one outing per day for variety; include something you'll look forward to doing each day, even if it's only a short walk.
- **Staying flexible:** If your day doesn't go according to plan, go with the flow so you don't feel frustrated; look at how your days go and, if they get off track, try to figure out why so you can make changes.

Have realistic expectations by ...

- Viewing both infant care and outside work as important, and keeping your "to-do" lists short.
- Keeping track of the time you spend taking care of your baby so you won't feel bad if you accomplish less than you'd hoped.
- Keeping a sense of humor and knowing that you'll survive.
- Postponing major life decisions, like job changes or home moves, until mom's hormones are back to normal and your new family has had time to settle in.

My Daily Reminder TIPS

- I will say encouraging things to myself to help keep a positive mental attitude.
- I will do something nice for myself every day, even if it is just a quiet break with a cup of tea.
- I will notice the ways my new baby and family are unique and special.

