

Settling Your Crying Baby

Crying is your Little One's way of communicating – they cry because they don't yet have words to tell you what they need. Learning to understand the cries and signs your baby gives you takes time. The more time you spend getting to know your baby, the better you'll get at knowing what they want. Parenting is like entering into a dance with your child, and like any dance it takes practice.

Research has shown that infants cry an average of two to three hours a day. Every baby is different, and you might find that your baby cries more or less than this. Crying is most common in the late afternoon or early evenings which is a notoriously stressful time for parents. Your face, voice, and cuddles are the tools you have to reassure and respond to your baby when they cry or are unsettled. Keeping them close, using a calm, reassuring voice and smiling as you feed or change them will work wonders.

Can I cuddle my baby too much?

As babies do not have the ability to calm themselves, they need your help to do this. Holding your Little One close and remaining calm will help to soothe them. Newborns feel safe, warm and secure when they are being held, especially against their parent's chest. Gentle rocking, movement and soothing sounds can be helpful when settling a crying baby.

It is important to know it is not possible to spoil a newborn. The attention you provide to your baby helps them learn that the world is a safe and predictable place and that they are loved and important. Babies who have consistent and nurturing relationships early in life develop a positive sense of self and have better physical, cognitive, social and emotional outcomes later in life.

COMMON REASONS BABIES CRY

Hunger: This is the most common reason for crying. A hunger cry is often loud and demanding. Crying will not stop until you feed the baby. Feeding baby may soothe them, almost immediately.

Discomfort: A baby may try to attract your attention after wetting their nappy as it is an uncomfortable feeling. They will also cry when they are too hot or too cold.

Tiredness: The tired cry alerts you that your baby needs to sleep. This cry is like a moan and a grizzle. It can be intermittent at first and then loud and persistent if your baby gets over tired.

Pain: If your baby is in pain or is unwell, crying is often in very high-pitched tones and sounds frantic. This cry is piercing and you will not miss it. See your local doctor for help.

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Bored or tired?

In most cases, your baby will cry if they are hungry, tired, or uncomfortable. If you have taken care of those physical needs and your baby continues to cry, they may need comfort, connection and reassurance from you.



Sometimes you may think your child is just bored and when you give them something to do the crying and signs of tiredness stop. Watch and see if the grizzly crying and tired signs start again in a few minutes. Babies and small children are easily distracted from their feeling of tiredness and this is why they get overtired so quickly. Overtired babies and children are more difficult to get to sleep.

Looking after yourself:

Our most important tip is to find a way to **calm yourself** when you are trying to soothe your crying baby. Although this might sound hard, it is important because your baby can pick up on your emotions. You may need to take turns with your partner and try to support each other as best you can.

NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY!

Listening to your baby cry can be incredibly stressful. Stress can turn to frustration as the urge for the crying to stop builds up. It is vital, however, that you never shake your baby. Shaking your baby can lead to brain damage or death. If you feel you are losing control, put your baby down and leave them in a safe place while you calm down.

If you are worried about how much your baby is crying, contact our Country Families Team or Parenting Line by calling 9368 9368 (metro) or 1800 111 546 (country).

Links to resources:

[Crying: Babies and children](#)

[Zero to Three - How to Stay Calm When Baby Won't Stop Crying](#)

[VIDEO- Settling a Crying Baby](#)

For parenting support and information contact

[Country Families @ Ngala](#) or [Ngala Parenting Line](#)

Supported By WA Country Health Service



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