

Playing and Talking

Babies love to communicate by looking at their parents and making different sounds.

- When your baby is alert and attentive, this is the time for play and talking
- There is no need for lots of toys at this stage; your face and voice are the best entertainment for your baby
- Babies learn about the world around them through playing and spending time with you
- Babies learn about other people from the gentle and affectionate way you talk to them and by the soft and kind tone of your voice.



Your baby will feel like playing or feeding when they are awake, alert and attentive (State 4)

Taking a Break

When does your baby need a break?

Newborn babies have their own special ways of telling you when things are getting too much for them. Here are some signs to look out for:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|
| • Change in skin colour (more pale, red, etc) | • Spit up | • Yawning |
| • Sneezing | • Tremble or startle | • Hiccuping |
| | • Fussing or crying | • Looking away |

If your baby shows any of these signs, slow down or stop as your baby might need a break from the activity you are doing together.

Look for clues your baby gives so you know what he likes or dislikes

Every Baby is Unique

Some babies have subtle signals, which may be hard to read and other babies are easier to understand. Your baby is unique and individual.

All parents have times when they feel tired and overwhelmed, because they don't understand their baby's changing needs. In these moments, be kind to yourself and keep trying to connect with your baby by listening, observing and empathising.

It may help you to talk to someone who understands what you are going through. So do reach out to other parents or to a health professional if you are struggling. Parenting a newborn baby is intense and we all need support.

Get in touch...

The Brazelton Centre UK

The Brazelton Centre UK provides training to practitioners nationwide in relationship-building techniques, including Newborn Behavioural Observations (NBO), to support parents in understanding their baby from birth to 3 months old.

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If you feel you need help, contact your health visitor or get in touch with us for guidance and support from a certified Brazelton practitioner in your area.

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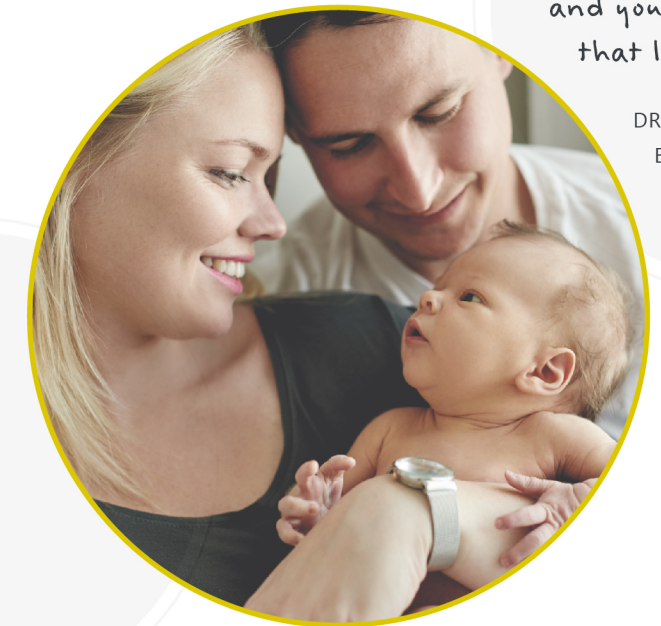
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Brazelton Centre UK

understanding baby behaviour



“A baby's behaviour is his language... and you can trust that language.”

DR. T. BERRY
BRAZELTON

The First Relationship

Getting to know more about what your baby is saying from birth to 3 months

The First Relationship

Right from birth, babies are learning about their world through you and the other people in it.



Your baby speaking to you.

From the moment they are born, babies are **communicating** with their parents.

For new parents, one of the biggest challenges is **learning** what their baby is saying.

Parents are often more confident once they are able to **understand** what their baby is telling them.

Your Baby Has Six States

Your baby has 6 different states, 3 sleep states and 3 awake states:



State 1 - Deep Sleep

- Eyes are closed
- Very regular breathing
- Might startle from time to time



State 2 - Light Sleep

- Eyes are still closed
- Might be some gentle body movements or sucking



State 3 - Drowsy

- Not quite asleep and not quite awake!
- Eyes may open and close
- Gentle movements



State 4 - Alert and Attentive

- Eyes are open and bright
- Interested in watching what people are doing, especially mum and dad
- Baby looks calm and alert



State 5 - Active Alert and Fussing

- Baby will be moving much more and vocalising
- Baby may be fussing



State 6 - Crying

- Baby's way of saying that they need something from you (like a soothing voice, a cuddle, something to eat, a nappy change)

Soothing Your Baby

All babies cry which is one of their methods of communicating with you.

When your baby cries, watch them for a few seconds to see what they are telling you.

Are they tired? Hungry? Need changing? Too hot? Is the room too bright? Too noisy? Are they overstimulated? Would they like some quiet time?

Look to see if your baby is calming themselves by sucking on their fingers or hands, looking at something or changing position.

Some babies find being undressed or bathed stressful and may cry. Think of ways to support them, such as undressing the bottom and top half separately and maybe try a gentle wash instead of a bath.

There are different ways to soothe and support your baby - here are some steps for you to try:

- Start by being close to your baby and look at them
- In a calm voice, talk to your baby while looking at them
- Try putting your hand on your baby's tummy as well
- Gently bring their arms together across their chest whilst talking softly
- If crying continues, pick up your baby, talk and hold calmly
- Add rocking to talking and holding
- Wrap loosely with their arms out and hands close to their mouth and rock calmly. Unwrap before placing them down to sleep.
- If still crying, try giving them something to suck, such as their hand.

Your baby may still be crying after going through all these steps, but it could assist you to find out how much help they need from you.

Most parents have days when their baby seems to cry no matter how hard they try to soothe them. Don't worry, babies will cry less over time.

Even when you feel you are making no difference, your presence lets your baby know they are not alone with their feelings. Crying usually reaches a peak at around six weeks and then starts to decrease - it will pass.

Look out for your baby's feeding cues and try to feed them before they cry