

# Soothing a Crying Baby

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## ALL BABIES CRY

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It is normal and natural. Healthy babies start crying the day that they are born. Crying increases when babies are 2 weeks old. Babies cry more in the afternoon or evening. Babies can cry 2 to 3 hours a days, for an hour at a time. It is normal. Sometimes, parents and caregivers can't figure out why a baby is crying.

Crying is the only way your baby can communicate. Your baby cries to tell you he or she:

- Is hungry.
- Needs to be burped.
- Needs a diaper change.
- Is too hot or too cold.
- Is lonely or scared.
- Is in pain or uncomfortable.
- Is over-tired or over-stimulated.



## TODDLERS CRY TOO

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Toddlers cry for the same reasons babies cry. Plus, toddlers cry when they try to learn new things. Toddlers and their crying can be especially frustrating at times such as:

- Potty training.
- Feeding time.
- Naptime and bedtime.
- When teething.

## TIPS FOR SOOTHING CRYING BABIES

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Because all babies cry, try not to let the crying frustrate you. Check for the common reasons for crying, then try some of the following:

- Hold the baby close and gently rock.
- Wrap the baby snugly in a soft blanket.
- Find a calm, quiet place. Turn out the lights; turn off loud music and the tv.
- Offer a pacifier.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller or car. Always use a car seat.
- Play soft music; hum or sing to the baby.
- Run the vacuum, dryer, dishwasher or fan to make background noise.
- Place the baby in a baby swing.
- Lay the baby across your lap and gently rub or tap the baby's back.
- If all else fails, place the baby on her back in a safe crib or playpen. Walk away and check back every 5 minutes.
- Call your baby's doctor or nurse if your baby seems sick.
- If you feel you are getting stressed out, call a trusted friend or relative for help.

## CALM YOURSELF SO YOU CAN CALM YOUR BABY SAFELY

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Caring for babies and toddlers is stressful, even when they are not crying. Know when you are becoming stressed out. Have a plan to calm yourself. After putting your baby on his back in a safe crib or playpen:

- Take several deep breaths and count to 100.
- Go outside for fresh air.
- Wash your face, or take a shower.
- Exercise. Do sit-ups, or climb the stairs a few times.
- Go in another room and turn on the TV or radio.
- Call a friend or a relative.
- Check your baby every 5 to 10 minutes.

## NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY

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No matter how long your baby cries or how frustrated you feel, never shake or hit your baby. Shaking can cause brain damage that can lead to:



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- Blindness
- Epilepsy (seizures)
- Intellectual disabilities
- Behavioral problems
- Deafness
- Cerebral Palsy
- Learning problems
- Poor coordination
- Death

- Has this person been a good caregiver to other babies?
- Will my baby be in a safe place with this person?
- Have I told this person to never shake my baby?

## TRUST YOUR INSTRUCT. IF IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, DON'T LEAVE YOUR BABY

Shaken Baby Syndrome is a brain injury that happens when a frustrated person violently shakes a baby or toddler.

## HAS YOUR BABY BEEN SHAKEN?

If you suspect your baby has been shaken call 911 immediately. All of the following signs are very serious:

- Limp, like a rag doll.
- Poor sucking and swallowing.
- Trouble breathing.
- Unable to waken.
- Irritability or crankiness.
- Seizures or trembling.
- Vomiting.
- Skin looks blue or feels cold.

Save precious time! If you think your baby has been shaken, tell the doctors right away!

## YOU ARE YOUR BABY'S PROTECTOR. CHOOSE CAREGIVERS WISELY

Even when you aren't with your baby, you are responsible for your baby's safety. Before leaving your baby with anyone ask these questions:

- Does this person want to watch my baby?
- Have I had a chance to watch this person with my baby before I leave?
- Is this person good with babies?

Do not leave your baby with anyone who:

- Is impatient or annoyed when your baby cries.
- Says your baby cries too much.
- Will become angry if your baby cries or bothers them.
- Might treat your baby roughly because they are angry with you.
- Has a history of violence.
- Has lost custody of their own children because they could not care for them.
- Abuses drugs or alcohol.

## APEC IS HERE TO HELP

APEC provides free training, information, and consultation to families. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at [www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com) or call our center.

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Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 \* Wetumpka AL, 36092 \* 334-567-2252 \* 866-532-7660

[www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com)