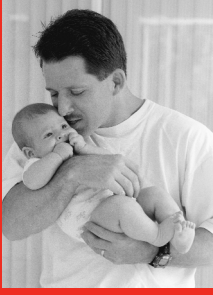


BEHAVIORS OF 0–18-MONTH-OLD CHILDREN



Situation #1: A crying baby

My 4-month-old baby just won't stop crying. I'm exhausted. I haven't had a full night's sleep for months, and here it goes again: Another night of horror—A screaming baby and no sleep!

Why is this happening?

Because babies

- Cry to tell us that something is wrong and that they need help.
- Cry when they are sick, hungry, cold, have a dirty diaper, are tired, or can't calm down.
- Can be frightened by the presence of strangers.
- Can cry until someone takes away the discomfort or until they are too exhausted to stay awake.
- Can be different: Some cry a lot, others hardly at all. This depends on the baby's temperament and personality.

Remember: Babies don't cry to annoy their parents or caregivers.

What can adults do in the situation described here?

- **Check the causes of a baby's crying** and do what is needed to eliminate it.
- **Comfort the baby:** This will not spoil the child. When babies cry, they need warm and caring attention to feel secure and safe.
- **Don't punish a crying baby**—be patient. Harsh responses will frighten the baby and will make the situation worse.
- **Never shake a baby.** It can cause serious injury like brain damage and even death.
- **Watch for patterns.** Some babies cry a lot, others not much, some cry at sunset. Try something different, like walking outside or having music in the room.
- **Know your baby's style:** Some need quiet, dark places to calm down; others can sleep in the midst of a crowd.

What can adults do if nothing works?

- Call another adult to be there to help calm the baby or simply to listen and support you.
- Leave the baby alone, safely in bed or in an infant seat, then dim the lights, close the door, and get some rest!