

Crying



Crying is the only way that a helpless baby can get their needs met. Babies cry to make sure they survive, so it is important we respond.

As a new parent, you may get very stressed if your baby cries a lot. Sometimes it's hard to know why your baby is crying. It's normal to feel stressed, frustrated and even angry with your baby when they cry. Sometimes it seems nothing you do helps. You may even think that your baby is crying just to annoy you.

Tiny babies do not cry to make you come, because they are not old enough to remember you when you are not there. They cry because they need something, but they don't know what they need. If you go to your baby when they cry, they will feel comforted and will learn that the world is a safe place.

Sometimes it can be hard to know why your baby is crying. As you get to know your baby, you will learn what some of their cries mean.

Why do babies cry?

Babies cry when they are:

- ⊕ hungry or thirsty
- ⊕ too hot or too cold
- ⊕ needing comfort
- ⊕ sick
- ⊕ needing a nappy change
- ⊕ needing to be held by you
- ⊕ having pain (eg tummy ache or earache)
- ⊕ feeling frightened, bored or lonely.

You can help settle your baby by:

- ⊕ making sure he is not hungry or uncomfortable
- ⊕ picking him up and holding him close to you
- ⊕ holding him upright against your shoulder
- ⊕ rocking or pushing him in the stroller
- ⊕ giving him a dummy to soothe him
- ⊕ playing some soothing music
- ⊕ watching for what settles him.


Babies over 6 months

Older babies may cry when they feel uncomfortable or hungry, or because they remember you when you are not there and they want you. This is sometimes called separation anxiety. It is normal and a part of their love and trust in you. They gradually learn that you are there for them and you won't leave them for long, so they start to feel safe without you but this takes time to learn. Often babies at this age will wake at night or are harder to put to bed because they miss you and they don't yet understand that you always come back.

You can help by:

- ⊕ always letting your baby know when you leave him - wave goodbye - and let him know when you return
- ⊕ playing little games such as peek-a-boo to help him get used to your coming and going
- ⊕ leaving him only with people he knows well and feels safe with
- ⊕ putting a bed in his room or putting his cot in your room so you can get some sleep as well.

Taking care of yourself when your baby cries

At times you may feel so upset when your baby cries (when nothing you do seems to stop your baby's crying) that  you feel like hurting your baby or leaving. If this happens, make sure he is safe and then leave the room until you feel better: sit quietly, scream into a pillow, play some music, make a cup of tea or ring someone who understands. You may find putting your baby in a stroller and walking out in the fresh air helps. Know yourself – do whatever helps you to feel less stressed.

Karitane and Tresillian offer services to help you in settling your baby. Contact Karitane on 02 9794 2350 or 1300 CARING. Contact Tresillian on 02 9787 0855 or 1800 637 357.

