



Coping With A Crying Baby

Infants and very young children cry as a way to communicate what they need to their caregivers. Even newborns have very distinct cries for different needs. When your baby starts to cry, check to see whether the crying is a signal your baby needs something specific, like a diaper change, feeding, relief from being too hot or cold, or attention for a fever. If your child continues to cry, you may want to try some of these suggestions. While there is no one single way to comfort a crying baby, in time you will learn what your baby responds to and prefers.



If your baby continues to cry after you've made sure there's no specific problem, try to stay calm while you check your own state of mind.

Are you upset?
or frustrated?
Do you need to distract yourself and the baby?
Is this a time to call someone to assist you?

Some babies enjoy motion. Try taking your baby for a car ride, putting baby in a baby seat and placing it on top of the washing machine, try using a baby swing.

Some babies like the feeling of physical contact.

You might try to lay down on your back and have the baby rest on your chest over your heart, give the baby a massage, carry the baby in different positions, such as holding her like a football, or rock together.

Your baby might be one who is comforted by sounds...

of your voice-talking, singing or humming, music, tapes of the ocean or the rain forest, the low hum of the vacuum cleaner or blow dryer.

Plan ahead. There are times, especially when you are tired, when a baby's crying can be very irritating. If your baby tends to cry often, make arrangements for regular child care relief, and get some rest. Have a "back-up" plan for calling in reliable help when your baby's crying seems impossible to deal with. Talk with your pediatrician, family physician, public health nurse or community health aide for ideas and services.

If you feel like you might lose control, stop!

Place your child safely in the crib, take a time-out and leave the child's room for a few minutes. Call a friend, family member, neighbor, or anyone else you trust and ask if they can come over to help you with the baby.

If you are concerned you may hurt the baby, call a parent helpline or your local shelter for help. Remember, no matter how upset you feel, don't shake your baby. A baby or child shaken with force in a moment of anger, can experience brain damage, permanent disabilities, even death.

Remember: NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY!



Community Resource Kit

Alaska Children's Trust 1-800-643-KIDS

Alaska Child Abuse Prevention Network. akchildabuseprevention.org