

Info-sheet Crying State

Crying (Active) State

Crying is considered another activity state for babies. Babies cry for a number of reasons they may be tired, cold, hungry, in pain or need comfort. For preterm babies they do not cry as often as term babies and often 'silent cry'. This is where they will show you that they are upset by moving their body, arms and legs and make a crying face however may not make a crying noise. A stronger, louder cry is seen in term babies. Different cries mean different things, over time it becomes easier to understand the difference between a cry that says I want attention or that I am hungry.

Body movements/activity	Increased activity of their body. Their skin colour darkens or changes to red
Eye Movements	Eyes may be tightly closed or open
Facial Movements	Grimaces
Breathing Pattern	More irregular than in other states
Level of response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babies in this state are extremely responsive to unpleasant stimuli either external (noise, activity) or internal (hunger, tiredness)
What this means for caregiving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babies cry in response to unpleasant stimuli or when their limits have been reached Sometimes older babies can calm themselves often help is needed from a parent or caregiver 	

Supporting crying babies

- You do not spoil a crying baby by picking them up and cuddling them. Babies are designed to be reliant on parents and caregivers they cannot feed or change themselves and need your help to do these things.
- Crying is a cue that lets you know that your baby needs your help and support.
- Crying is considered normal behaviour and is your baby's way of communicating with you.
- Sometimes it can be difficult to work out why your baby is crying. The following resource can help: <https://www.tresillian.org.au/advice-tips/crying/0-6-months/>

Information in this information sheet has been modified from the following sources:

- Blackburn, S., & Blakewell-Sachs (2003). Understanding the Behavior of Term Infants. White Plains, NY: March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, and https://www.marchofdimes.com/nursing/index.bm2?cid=00000003&spid=ne_s1_1&tpi
- Caring for your baby in the Neonatal Unit: A parents handbook (2014) Inga Warren and Cherry Bond