

Baby Behavior Basics: Guide for Training Child Care Providers

Overview:

Baby Behavior Basics covers information on how babies from birth to 18 months communicate with their caregivers, including:

- ◇ Infant cues – What babies look like when they are tired, hungry, alert, or overstimulated with a focus on the difference between being ready to learn and play and needing to take a break from stimulation or rest.
- ◇ Typical sleeping patterns for infants
- ◇ Why babies cry and how to respond when they do

Available Materials:

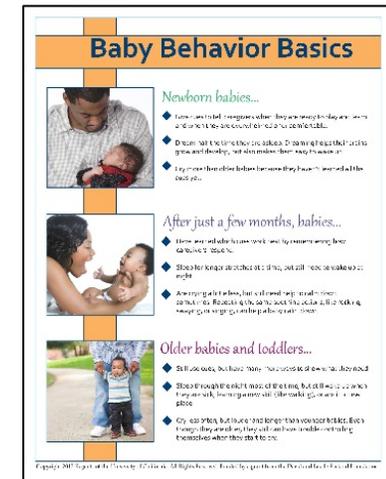
- ◇ Video - Baby Behavior Basics
- ◇ Handout (single-sided, for providers and parents)



To access the materials, visit

Website: <http://lactation.ucdavis.edu/baby-behavior-in-child-care/>

Password: BBCC2017



Tips for sharing with childcare providers

- ◇ Ask providers to share what parents tell them about how their babies communicate with them. They may list things like crying, fussing, or smiling. Explain how these overt cues can be used to start conversations about more subtle cues and responding to cues appropriately.
- ◇ Share the video and handout with the provider. Point out specific topics covered that they may want to share with parents.
- ◇ Help providers identify specific opportunities that they have to share messages with the parents of the children that they care for, such as pick up and drop off times when updating parents on the activities of the day, in newsletters or calendars, or when parents ask questions.

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Baby Behavior Basics



Newborn babies...

- ◆ Give cues to tell caregivers when they are ready to play and learn and when they are overwhelmed or uncomfortable.
- ◆ Dream half the time they are asleep. Dreaming helps their brains grow and develop, but also makes them easy to wake up.
- ◆ Cry more than older babies because they haven't learned all the cues yet.



After just a few months, babies...

- ◆ Have learned which cues work best by remembering how caregivers respond.
- ◆ Sleep for longer stretches at a time, but still need to wake up at night.
- ◆ Are crying a little less, but still need help to calm down sometimes. Repeating the same soothing actions, like rocking, swaying, or singing, can help a baby calm down.



Older babies and toddlers...

- ◆ Still use cues, but have many more ways to show what they need.
- ◆ Sleep through the night most of the time, but still wake up when they are sick, learning a new skill (like walking), or are in a new place.
- ◆ Cry less often, but louder and longer than younger babies. Even though they are older, they still can have trouble controlling themselves when they start to cry.

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Highlights

- Starting the day they are born, babies have ways of communicating what they need using *cues*.
- As babies grow, they learn which cues work best for communicating with their caregivers.
- How caregivers respond to babies' cues determines which cues they'll use to let their caregivers know what they need.
- Babies sleep patterns change as they grow. It is healthy for newborns to wake often at night and they sleep more at night as they get older. Older babies and toddlers will still wake at night sometimes.
- Crying changes as babies grow. They cry less when they learn which cues work best.

Ideas for Sharing Opportunities

- Discuss the noticeable changes in the abilities of older babies compared to newborns

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