



# 26 ways to settle your baby

## BABY DEVELOPMENT ARTICLES

### ARTICLE

FEB 2, 2024

5 MINS

When baby won't settle, you can do more than count from 1 to 10 - try 26.

Babies cry. It's their major means of communication. Generally, babies cry when hungry, uncomfortable or wet. When crying occurs for no apparent reason, your baby may just need attention. Hold your baby close to you. The sound of your voice or a rocking motion will often settle your baby. If that doesn't work, here are 26 tips from practical solutions to knowledge that help you better understand your baby.

Listen

26 ways to settle your baby

## 1

First, good sleep patterns are important for growth and development. Be consistent.

## 2

Babies need warmth, food, sleep and social stimulation. Not giving enough or giving too much of any of these may result in common infant settling problems.

## 3

Help babies distinguish between night and day. Allow them to sleep as long as they wish through the night, but do not let a young baby sleep longer than 4 hours between feeds during the day. Four hourly feeds are timed from the start of one feed to the start of the next. This means that sometimes, your baby will need to be awakened during the day.

## 4

You cannot make a tired baby sleep. But by distraction, you can inadvertently make one who is tired stay awake.

## 5

The younger the baby, the more sleep it needs. Most young babies need between 16-18 hours a day. During the first year, sleep needs decrease by about 1.5 hours every three months.

## 6

Babies who feel too warm do not sleep well. Make sure your baby's sleep room is at a comfortable temperature -22 to 25°C is the best. If the tummy and back are warm, your baby is warm. Hands or feet that are cool to touch do not necessarily mean that your baby is cold.

## 7

Babies do not require absolute silence to fall asleep. In fact, it is not advisable to get your baby accustomed to sleeping in total silence because he or she may awaken at the slightest sound. On the other hand, it is wise to avoid loud noises and bright lights which may startle and wake your baby.

## 8

Babies who have become overtired may have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep.

## 9

Brief awakenings through the sleep period are normal. During settled sleep, these will pass unnoticed, although your baby may make small noises.

## 10

Once put to bed, allow your baby ten minutes to settle. This period can often be accompanied by some grizzling or crying. If your baby is not overtired, this crying will usually be minimal and should diminish as he or she gets more proficient at settling him or herself.

# 11

Have all family members put your baby to bed in the same way. Babies are more settled if they know what is expected of them. Baby routines are a form of 'same way' parenting.

# 12

Most hungry babies do not sleep well, but some sleep too much. If your baby is gaining weight within normal guidelines, then restlessness is unlikely to be caused by hunger. If your baby's weight gains are inadequate, even though he or she sleeps well but needs to be woken for feeds, then undernourishment could well be a problem. Seek professional help.

# 13

Babies who are unwell are not always unsettled or in pain. Some sleep longer than usual, especially if the illness induces fever. If your baby is in pain, do not self-medicate—seek professional advice. Sleep patterns which are disrupted by illness or immunisations should be restored to their usual pattern as soon as possible.

# 14

Feed patterns are intricately linked to sleep patterns. Feeds which take too long may tire your baby unnecessarily and make sleep difficult.

## 15

If babies settle easily but wake soon after settling, try to consider why they may be reluctant to settle by themselves. For example, if your baby falls asleep in your arms and you then put them into bed, they may wake up and cry

## 16

The best sleeping position for babies is on their backs. When babies sleep on their tummies, they are at an increased risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome),

## 17

Growth spurts may make your baby feed more frequently but this should last one or two days only. Not all babies become unsettled during growth spurts, which tend to occur at about three weeks, Six weeks, three months and five months

## 18

Remember that crying is part of a young baby's development

## 19

Think carefully about your parenting style. Be aware of what you are teaching your baby. Your baby learns to make connections between events and remembers what brings him or her success. Frequent changing of parenting styles will only confuse and cause upset.

## 20

Babies thrive on reasonable regularity. If baby's routine needs to be disrupted, a period of upset can follow. Compensate for this or return to the routine as soon as possible.

## 21

The stool of a newborn may not have an odour. Newborns will usually need 8 or 9 nappy changes a day. So check frequently to see your baby needs a nappy change. Changing nappies frequently will help reduce the chance of nappy rash, which is often caused by irritation from stools or urine.

## 22

Recognise what your baby's needs are for his or her particular age. It's easy to assume, particularly for first-time parents, that baby is capable of thinking and acting in ways more mature than his or her normal age development. This can be stressful, making your baby irritable and unhappy.

## 23

Recognise when your baby is tired. These subtle signals are often misinterpreted as pain, colic or even hunger. Classic signs of tiredness are yawning, grizzling, jerky movements and crying.

## 24

All babies have 'wind'. Although normal wind may cause slight, temporary discomfort, it does not cause pain. If your baby seems to be in pain from 'wind', seek advice from a health professional.

## 25

Young babies do not need toys in their cots to help them sleep. Older babies may enjoy having some toys or snuggle rugs to cuddle or play with.

## 26

Maternal health issues sometimes influence infant settling. The reason for this is not fully understood, but if you've tried everything and your baby is still unsettled and you are feeling unhappy, seek professional assessment.

*We hope you've found these 26 tips useful. Here's to your baby's health and happiness. If you need further clarifications, please speak to your healthcare professional.*

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