



Understanding Your Infant's Cues

Playing detective can help you to figure out what your infant is trying to say. See our helpful chart below for some common cues babies often share.

CUE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT YOU CAN DO
Facial expression		
Opening eyes wide	Interested, surprised	Start to play (try peek-a-boo)
Looking away	Bored, overwhelmed	Allow for downtime
Blinking	Fighting against being overwhelmed	Allow for downtime
Smiling	Content, happy, familiar	Smile back and say, "Look at your big smile! Are you happy to see me?"
Frowning	Unhappy, confused	Try and figure out what could be upsetting your baby and comfort them
Body language		
Arching back	Upset	Try and figure out what could be upsetting your baby and comfort them
Squirming	Uncomfortable	Try and figure out what could be upsetting your baby and comfort them
Clenching hands, stiffening limbs	Tense, excited	Use a calm voice and soothing touch
Kicking, waving arms	Alert, excited	Act excited too and tell your baby what you are excited for
Staring blankly, yawning, rubbing eyes, stretching	Tired	Time to sleep (respond as soon as you see this, won't miss the window!)

CUE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT YOU CAN DO
Sound		
Crying, whimpering, gasping	Distressed, angry	Try and figure out what could be upsetting your baby and comfort them
Laughing, blowing bubbles, squealing	Happy	Enjoy this moment together and participate (for example, smile and laugh back)
Cooing, singing, babbling	Happy, comfortable	Enjoy this moment together and participate (for example, imitate the noises she's making)