

Every baby is different

No baby is naughty. Like adults, every baby is different.

Your baby may be easygoing and calm, or wakeful and active. They may settle quickly into a regular routine or be more unpredictable.

If they are fussy and unsettled, it doesn't mean they're being naughty or annoying you on purpose. Crying is their way of communicating.

Whatever your baby's personality, here are some tips to help you all get off to a great start:

- Give them lots of attention. You can't spoil a baby with too much love.
- Babies feel safe and secure when you respond quickly to their crying.
- Singing, talking and cuddling all help their brain to grow and build a strong bond with mum and dad.
- Smile at them lots – eventually they'll smile back!



Crying

All babies cry – some more than others. It's their way of telling you what they need. At times they'll cry more than usual and be harder to calm. This could be because they're teething or having a growth spurt.

Coping with crying can be really hard, especially when you are tired too. Try to remember that this stage won't last forever – things will settle down.

Try:

- Checking their nappy. Are they hungry? Tired? Too hot or cold? Or just too much going on?
- Taking them somewhere quiet.
- Holding, rocking, talking or singing softly.
- Giving them a warm bath.
- Moving – a ride in the buggy, a sling or frontpack.

Baby blues?

It's normal to feel a bit down or stressed at times with a new baby. Here are some ways other mums and dads have coped.

You can:

- Keep talking with each other about what's going on. It can be a struggle for everyone getting used to less sleep and money.
- Accept that baby's needs come first at this early stage. Meals will be late, washing will pile up and baby will want a feed even when you've got visitors.
- Let the housework wait if baby needs you now.
- Don't try to go it alone. Accept any offers of help – meals, odd jobs, watching baby while you take a shower.
- Get sleep when you can. Sleep when baby sleeps.
- Try to get some fresh air – a short walk or a change of scene can give you more energy.

Parent tip

"Don't expect to get much done in those first weeks. Anything besides looking after baby is a bonus!"

Sleeping:

Sleeping like a baby? It's a misleading term – sometimes you may feel like your baby never sleeps.

To help them settle and sleep longer:

- Watch for 'sleepy' signs – yawning, jerky movements, clenched fists. If babies get overtired they can be harder to settle and wake more often.
- Try and put baby to bed when they are relaxed and sleepy, but not quite yet asleep.
- Soothe them with gentle stroking, singing, or rocking. Soft music might also help.

Parent tip

"If you start stressing out and no one can take over, it can help to phone a friend."

