Baby cues introduction

This is a transcript of the Raising Children Network video available at https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/behaviour/crying/baby-cues.

Narrator: Long before they can talk, babies use cues or non-verbal language to let us know what they need. If you watch your baby closely, you might notice that he does certain things when he’s hungry or sleepy. These are the cues that can help you understand what’s going on with your baby and how to respond. You can’t spoil a little baby. Responding to your baby’s cues whenever you see them will help baby feel safe and secure. In fact, responding quickly and lovingly when your baby needs attention will probably mean less crying overall.

But it is normal for babies to cry and all babies do it. It might seem like your baby’s crying for no obvious reason and you can’t do anything to soothe her. People sometimes call this colic. The good news is that crying usually peaks around six to eight weeks and then tails off. Studies show that most babies cry for around three hours a day and many for much more. Over 90% of crying that’s hard to soothe has no medical cause but, if you are worried about your baby, talk to your health care professional.

All babies are different and each baby will develop her own mix of signs. Some babies have really unusual cues, which even paediatricians wouldn’t be able to pick up on, so don’t put too much pressure on yourself if you’re having trouble working out what your baby needs.

These videos can help you learn more about baby cues and you can see what the cues look like in real babies.