Baby cues: play

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

Narrator: In the first few weeks, newborns pretty much feed and sleep, feed and sleep, with very little awake time in between. As your baby grows, she’ll be awake for longer and start interacting with you more. This is what we call a feed, play, sleep pattern. If you’re looking for a routine, feed, play, sleep will probably work better than worrying too much about following the clock.

[On screen text: I want to play.
  • Eyes wide and bright
  • Studying your face and making eye contact
  • Smiling]

If you’re wondering how to tell when your baby wants to interact and play, you can look out for signs like eyes wide and bright, studying your face and making eye contact, smiling.

[On screen text:
  • Smooth movements
  • Reaching out to you
  • Babbling and cooing]

Moving her arms and legs smoothly, reaching out to you, babbling and cooing. Even at a young age, babies will take turns and wait for you to talk back to them.

Now let’s see what these cues look like in real babies.

[On screen text: Studying your face, making eye contact.]

Mum singing with baby: Up and down, side to side, side to side, back and forth and back and forth. [playful gibberish sound] Are you going to smile?

[On screen text describing what babies are doing: Eye contact; Smiling and babbling; smooth movements; Smiling; Babbling; Eyes wide and face bright; Reaching out to you]

Narrator: When you see these cues, your baby’s saying he needs your attention. It’s a good time to talk to your baby, hold him or play with him. Even if you’re in the middle of something, like making dinner, you can give your baby attention by chatting with him about what you’re doing or what he’s playing with or doing.