

*My baby is changing so fast! I thought that as he got older, he'd be more independent, but he seems to be getting more clingy and afraid. And he's starting to get angry when he doesn't get his own way!*

## Cues

Your baby was born with a set of built-in cues to let you know what he needs. For example, he might suck on his fist or fingers when he's hungry. Or close his mouth when he's full.

When you respond to these cues, you are communicating with your baby. You are showing him that he has ways to let you know what he needs. As your baby grows and is able to do

more, his cues will change. He'll begin to develop new ways of communicating.

Your baby is still too young to be able to tell you what he needs or to explain how he feels. He can only show you. His behaviour is a way of communicating with you. When you respond to your baby, think: "What is my baby trying to tell me?"

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### Your baby will show he's happy and enjoying himself by:

- Turning, moving, or reaching toward you
- Looking at you with bright, wide eyes
- Clapping, laughing, squealing
- Touching, hugging, kissing
- Waving his arms and kicking his legs
- Pointing at what he wants



### Your baby will show you he's unhappy, tired, or upset by:

- Turning, looking, or moving away from you
- Arching his back, pushing away
- Frowning, pouting, sticking out his lower lip
- Fussing, crying, screaming, kicking



## What to expect



Between 6 and 12 months, many parents notice a few big changes in the way their baby behaves.

- Your baby may not want to let you out of her sight.
- Your baby may become shy and afraid of strangers.
- Your baby may get upset and angry when she can't do something she wants to do.

Parents are sometimes surprised by these changes but they are a natural and important part of your baby's development. Try to see things from your baby's point of view. This can help you understand what she's feeling and why she acts the way she does.

### Added info...

It can be tiring and frustrating when your baby cries, clings, and wants you every minute. All parents need some help once in a while.

Try to find someone to help you—like a trusted friend or a relative—who can come on short notice when you need a break. Keep their phone number handy.

Talking to other parents can also be a big help. You'll find information about support for families in the "Welcome" section of **Loving Care: Parents and Families**.

## Behaviour

## Your baby may not want to let you out of his sight

### What your baby is feeling

Your baby knows that you are the most important person in his life. He depends on you for everything. He has formed a strong bond with you. When he can't see you, he doesn't know where you are. He doesn't know if you'll come back. This is very scary for a baby. He'll cry for you when he can't see you.

This is a healthy part of your baby's development. It means that your baby is strongly attached to you. It means that he's learning how much he needs you.

### Added info...

Don't feel guilty about leaving your baby to go out once in a while! You need some time to relax—by yourself, with your partner, or with friends.

And your baby needs to learn that when you go away, you **do** come back.



### What you can do

This can be very tiring for parents! Be patient. Your baby needs to learn that he can count on you to be there when he needs you. He needs to know that he can trust you to come back when you go away. This can take time.

To help your baby feel safe and loved:

- **Give him as much love and time as you can.**  
Keep him near as much as possible. When he can crawl, let him follow you from room to room. This won't spoil him! When your baby gets the love he needs, he'll feel safe. When he feels safe, he'll be able to become more independent.
- **Help him become attached to other people in his life.**  
Your baby needs other people, even if he doesn't know it. Encourage the other people your baby is comfortable with to give him lots of love and attention.
- **Don't sneak out on your baby.**  
It can be very hard to leave when your baby is screaming for you. It can seem easier to just sneak away when he's not looking and avoid the fuss. Don't do it. This will only teach your baby that he can't trust you. It will make him more worried when he can't see you. He'll cling to you more.  
  
When you have to leave your baby, be sure he knows the person you're leaving him with. Tell your baby "bye-bye" and that you'll be back soon. He'll still cry, but he'll also slowly learn to trust that you **will** come back.

## Your baby may become shy and afraid of strangers

### What your baby is feeling

Your baby knows she loves **you**, but she's not so sure about other people anymore. She's learned that people are different. And there are some people she's more comfortable with than others.

Often what scares your baby isn't the new person. It's what the new person does. For example, would you like a perfect stranger to come up to you on the street and hug you? Your baby doesn't like it much either. Remember that people you know—even relatives—may be strangers to your baby.

### What you can do

#### **Respect your baby's feelings.**

Give her time to get used to someone new. Let her meet new people while sitting safely on your lap or looking over your shoulder. When your baby is ready, she'll move toward anyone she wants to go to.



## Your baby may get upset when he can't do what he wants to do

### What your baby is feeling

Your baby is curious about everything. He wants to try new things. It can be very frustrating for him when he can't do what he wants to! And he lets you know he's upset by crying, screaming, and kicking. This doesn't mean that your baby is bad. It's the only way he has to show you how he feels.

### What you can do

#### Be calm.

The best thing you can do when your baby is upset and angry is to stay calm. Your baby is much more likely to quiet down when you are calm and speak to him in a gentle voice. Ask yourself what your child is feeling. Put his feelings into words for him. For example, "You're upset!" or "You feel angry."

These strong feelings are new to your baby. He needs you to be calm and in control when he's feeling out of control. When you get angry, it frightens your baby and makes things worse. No matter how upset your baby gets, never spank, shake, or yell at him.

There are several reasons why your baby might get frustrated:

- **Your baby wants to do something he's not yet able to do.**

For example, he's learned to sit up by himself, but he hasn't yet learned how to go from sitting to crawling. He gets stuck in one position.

If this is the case, help your baby learn the skill he needs. Help him practice going from sitting to crawling.

- **You've stopped your baby from doing something that he wants to do.**

You can't let your baby do things that could hurt him or someone else, no matter how much he wants to. Try distracting your baby with another interesting toy or activity. Try moving him to another place. Sometimes this doesn't work right away and your baby keeps crying. When this happens, tell him you understand how he feels. For example, "I know you want to play with the plastic bag, but it's not safe." Keep comforting him.

### CAUTION!

**Never shake, spank, or yell at your baby.**

**Shaking can hurt or kill your baby.**

**Spanking won't teach your baby to behave.** It will hurt and frighten him. It will teach him to be afraid of you. It will teach him that he can't trust you not to hurt him. It will teach him that it's okay for him to hit other people.

**Yelling won't teach your baby to behave either.** It will frighten him. It will teach him that it's okay for him to yell when he's angry or upset.

For information on handling stress and anger, see the "All Parents" section in **Loving Care: Parents and Families**.



# Loving Care



6 to 12 Months

2010

  
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