

# Infant States



## Crying

- Tears
- Jerky movements
- Color changes
- Muscle tension
- Rapid breathing
- Generally doesn't respond quickly



## Irritable (Active Alert)

- Lots of movement
- Irregular breathing
- Eyes open, but not focused
- Sometimes fussy
- Sensitive to body and surroundings
- Common before feeding



## Quiet Alert

- Little body movement
- Eyes open and wide
- Steady, regular breathing
- Very responsive
- Wants to play and interact
- Requires energy and can make babies tired

## Drowsy

- Variable movement
- Irregular breathing
- Opens and closes eyes
- Tired eyes
- Delayed reaction time
- Easily awakened and startled



## Active Sleep

- Some movement
- Irregular breathing
- Facial movement
- Rapid eye movement (REM)
- Easy to wake up
- Easily awakened and startled



## Quiet Sleep

- No body movement
- Regular breathing
- Bursts of sucking
- Not easily wake up



Intensity

Intensity

Intensity

Intensity

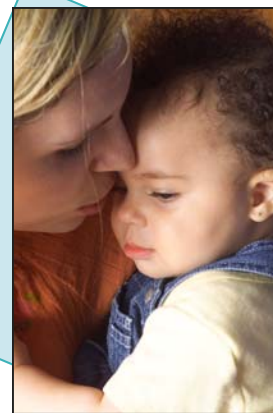
Babies can move through states very quickly, making it hard for parents to know why their baby is behaving the way she is. Being aware of cues and paying attention to the baby's surroundings can help caregivers understand why their babies might be upset or overly sleepy.

## Repetition to Soothe:

Whenever a baby is crying, caregivers should be encouraged to try to identify why the baby is crying. Once the baby's needs are met, he may still be fussy. Fussy babies will calm down when caregivers remain calm and use soothing sounds and motions over and over again. Remember, it may take a few minutes or more to calm a baby who is very upset.

## Examples (repeat over and over):

- Sing a song softly
- Hold the baby close and rock gently back and forth
- Rub the baby's back
- Say the baby's name in a calm voice



## Variety to awaken:

Sometimes babies are very sleepy and may be hard to wake for feeds. Newborns of mothers who had medication during labor may be particularly sleepy. Fortunately, babies brains are made to react to varied stimulation.

When a sleepy baby needs to wake up, it is best to use different touches, sounds, and positions to stimulate the baby's brain.

## Examples:

- Change the baby's position
- Remove the baby's clothes and/or change her diaper
- Touch the baby gently in several different places (toes, hands, tummy)
- Call the baby by name several times

Although all healthy babies are different, most move through the states in similar ways. If babies are very sleepy or very upset, it may take some time for them to respond. If a baby does not respond at all to the suggestions above (after several minutes), she may need to be referred to a doctor.