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Our ambitious dream at The Parenting Place is for Aotearoa New Zealand to be a place where every family flourishes and every child feels deeply loved. For over 20 years, we have been inspiring and equipping whānau to thrive through a range of nationwide programmes, resources and events. We also connect with a quarter of a million young people each year, encouraging them to lead resilient, connected lives through our Attitude programme in schools.



Toolbox courses inspire and equip families. They are bursting with great advice, humour and encouragement, offering practical strategies and insights into developmental stages. The courses are run over six weeks in a relaxed and conversational small group setting with a trained facilitator. The four courses – Building Awesome Whānau, Early Years, Middle Years, and Tweens and Teens run nationwide throughout the year.



Sometimes family life is way more challenging than we ever imagined. Family Coaching is designed to meet you wherever you are on your parenting or relationship journey. We want to be on the journey with you. Our coaches will listen to you and bring their extensive training and experience to help bring new insights, ideas and practical solutions.

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HOT  
TIPS

*early years*

# WHY WON'T BABY STOP CRYING?

## WHY WON'T BABY STOP CRYING?

What do they want? Are they sick? Will they wake everyone in the house? I've done everything I can – what more can I do?

Babies cry for lots of reasons but never to make you angry. Crying is a normal way for babies to communicate, in fact they have no other way to communicate to you that they are hungry, cold, uncomfortable or upset. It is also very normal for us to feel moved and emotional when our baby cries – we are 'wired' to respond to their cry. So it is very understandable if we get more and more emotional when their crying goes on and on. Babies cry most between the age of two and four months. Prolonged crying generally lessens when babies are around five months old.

A persistently crying baby can make normally sane, rational parents become frustrated, desperate and angry, to the point where some shake their babies to get them to stop. Not only does it not work, it can seriously injure their delicate little brains.

Sadly, every year about 20 babies are admitted with injuries consistent with Shaken Baby Syndrome. Their average age is five months.

The long-term effects can include blindness, mental problems and even death. Crying, especially inconsolable crying is probably the most common trigger for shaking a baby. *Never* shake a baby.

Be aware of signs of frustration and anger in yourself and others caring for your baby. It is good to have a plan to handle prolonged crying to prevent you ever getting anywhere near the point where you might harm your child.

## CHECK THE BASICS

- Make sure baby feels safe and loved. Babies feel emotions just like adults do but they tell us what they are feeling in different ways.
- Feed baby
- Try for a burp – trapped wind isn't pleasant
- Change baby's nappy and check for nappy rash
- Check the fit of baby's clothing – not too tight or twisted
- Check the temperature – not too hot or cold



## NEXT STEPS

- Be patient. Take a deep breath and count to 10 (or 10,000!).
- Call a relative or friend. Another adult voice on the other end of the line will be very therapeutic. If they are parents themselves, they will understand and won't mind taking a call, even if it is very late.
- Call someone you trust to take over for a while, then get away, get some rest, take care of yourself.
- If you are feeling distressed and can't think of anyone else, call a telephone counselling service like Lifeline. No, they won't be able to make your baby stop crying but they will help you stay calm (and no, they won't think you are being silly).
- Put your baby in a crib on his or her back. Make sure the baby is safe, and then walk away for a bit, checking on your baby every five to 10 minutes.

## STILL CRYING?

- Take the baby for a walk outside in a stroller or for a ride in the car
- Hold the baby against your chest and gently rock back and forth
- Rock, walk, or dance with baby
- Lower any surrounding noise and lights
- Offer the baby a noisy rattle or toy
- Hold the baby and breathe slowly and calmly – the baby may feel your calmness and become quiet.
- Sing or talk to the baby using soothing tones – the content doesn't matter. Even reciting the shopping list might work.
- Do some vacuuming, dry your hair near the baby or sit near the dishwasher – oddly, noise calms some babies better than quietness. There are also apps for smart phones that play soothing sounds, and many YouTube videos.

- Is your baby unwell? Sometimes illness causes long bouts of crying, especially high-pitched crying or crying with a different pattern. Look for other signs and of illness (rashes, diarrhoea, fever etc.) and seek medical advice.

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Remember, this will get better. You are not a bad parent if your baby continues to cry after you have done all you can to calm him or her.