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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

How to Handle a Crying Baby¹

Donna Davis²

The sound of a newborn baby. It's a sound that evokes a flood of emotion from joy and excitement to worry and anxiety! What *should* new parents anticipate from a newborn in those first couple months of life? For the most part, it's sleep. While some babies will sleep for long stretches of time, others wake up more frequently. Typically, a baby will sleep about 16 hours a day.

Usually when babies wake up, they may be hungry, have a wet diaper, or need more rest. Some infants are easily comforted while others have a harder time, depending on their temperaments. Even as a newborn, a child has a particular way of approaching the world. Mood, adaptability, activity level, and the ability to calm themselves or to be calmed by a caregiver can all influence these tiny people. Parents need to be patient as they will soon get a sense of how easy or hard it is to determine their infant's needs, sometimes simply by understanding the nature of their baby's cry.

There are many ways to soothe crying infants. The important thing is to respond to a baby's needs with tenderness and care. Some researchers have found that mothers who delayed or failed to respond to their young baby's cries had infants who cried more at the end of the first year. Some experts say it is impossible to spoil a newborn.

1. This document is FAR0003, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published November 2007. Reviewed December 2010. In the interest of time or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Please visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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