

Transcribed from the Family Album Radio Program, a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at familyalbumradio.org

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

Soothing a Crying Baby¹

Suzanna Smith²

All babies cry, for many different reasons: "they're startled, hungry, cold or hot, tired, wet, bored, annoyed, [or] have gas..." (Jana & Shu, 2005, p. 108). And they cry an average of two to four hours a day (Jana & Shu)!

The first thing to do when your baby cries is to respond right away (Shifford, n.d.). You won't spoil your baby this way. Instead it builds a trusting, caring relationship.

Try to find out why your baby is crying. She or he may be tired, hungry, or need to be changed. Check for problems such as a pokey pin, or fever and illness.

If you've taken care of the basics and your baby isn't sick, here are some other things to try:

- Cuddle your baby. Babies need comfort and closeness.
- Take a walk with your baby in a sling or stroller, or a little drive in a car.
- Use some simple sound effects. Turn on the vacuum cleaner, washing machine or shower. Sing or play soft music.
- Provide something safe to suck on, such as a pacifier or your little finger.
- Relax. Babies can pick up on your stress.
- Hand your baby off to someone else until you feel calmer.

1. This document is FAR0429, 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 March 2009. In the interest of time or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Suzanna Smith, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service; Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida; Gainesville 32611.

- Or place your baby in a safe place like a crib or car seat while you calm yourself.

Never shake your baby.

It's not unusual for new parents to feel like crying from time to time, too. So if you feel stressed, talk to someone about your feelings. And if your baby keeps crying or cries more than usual, make sure to see your baby's health care provider.

Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life. "Family Album" is a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our Web site at <http://www.familyalbumradio.org>.

To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/461.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/461.wav