



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN

Loving your Fussy Baby

Why does my baby cry so much!!!??

Most babies “fall apart” one or more times a day when they’re tired, hungry or stressed. But what if your baby fusses or cries over every little thing? When your best efforts to soothe him don’t work, it’s natural to be disappointed and tense. You might even wonder if the baby loves you!

It is hard to enjoy a fussy baby.

Yet it’s important to know the baby isn’t fussing on purpose or to make you feel bad. She’s telling you the only way she can that something isn’t right and she needs *you* to fix it.

Infants who cry in the evenings might have colic. But if your baby is over four months old, or a toddler, temperament could be the cause. Grandma called it disposition or personality. Whatever name you choose there’s no doubt that some people are easier to live with than others. And some babies are easier to parent than others!

What kind of baby do you have?

Our personalities are made up of many parts but the traits listed below strongly influence how a baby copes with the world around him. You can’t change your baby’s temperament anymore than you can the color of his eyes, but there is much you can do to help him adjust to the world and feel calm.

PERSISTENCE

Can do something for a long time and protests when interrupted. Adults call this stubborn, but learning any new skill requires practice and a baby’s job is learning. She laughs and frolics *or* cries and fusses much longer than other babies.

INTENSITY

What big, strong feelings from such a little body! Has more ups and downs than a milder baby. It’s easy to recognize the loud intense baby, yet some respond with the same

intensity only *quietly*. These babies put a lot of energy into their frequent and powerful reactions.

REGULARITY

How much he depends on a schedule for comfort. If every day is different and your baby prefers a regular schedule, he may be overwhelmed by the smallest changes. Or he may be *irregular* so it's harder for you to predict his needs and meet them before he falls apart.

ENERGY LEVEL

She fusses and struggles over routine care and may not be truly happy until she is mobile. How much your baby wiggles, squirms, and moves around is an aspect of energy that is physical. Another is how she reacts to the energy around her. If she can't get rid of energy positively, she may have to "cry it out".

SENSITIVITY

Notices AND reacts to things you can't even see. Loud noises and TV, strong odors, bright lights, people's moods (especially yours), and the texture of clothing are a few examples. This type of baby becomes over stimulated long before his peers and depends on you to remove the offending stimuli or change the situation.

ADAPTABILITY

How easily your baby handles quick changes. Does she get upset when you shift from one activity, person or place to another? She may need you to make fewer transitions, take them slower or prepare her. Talk about what you're going to do next. The tone of your voice will comfort her.

What you can do...

LOOK FOR A PATTERN...What sets him off? When? What *works*?

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS...You know your baby better than anyone.

BELIEVE YOUR BABY...Learn what her limits are and respect them.

HOLD YOUR BABY...The more you hold him the less he'll cry.

DISTRACT YOUR BABY...Sing, clap hands, talk. Go outside for a walk.

TALK...About her feelings and reactions. This makes her feel so important!

TIME HELPS ALL...These guessing games end soon and arguing begins!