

# BABY'S CUES

(Adapted from *Baby Cues: A Child's First Language*, NCAST-AvenUW)



Babies are able to let us know what they want right from birth. Because they can't talk, they use their whole body to communicate with us – we call this communication 'Baby Cues'. If we take the time to watch our babies, we can often pick up their cues and this takes lots of the guess work out of caring for them.

'Baby Cues' usually fall into two types:

- *Engagement Cues* – cues that mean I want to be with you.
- *Disengagement Cues* – cues that mean "I need a break" from whatever is happening. This may mean having a rest or needing reassurance.

The cues babies give can be quite strong eg crying or can be quite mild. Below are some examples of the different types of cues. Have you noticed any of these with your baby?

## ***I WANT TO BE WITH YOU***

### **Strong Cues**

Smiling  
Giggling  
Turning eyes and head toward you  
Babbling sounds  
Smooth body movements

### **Mild Cues**

Bright face and eyes  
Raising head  
Hands open with fingers slightly curled

## ***I NEED A BREAK OR CHANGE*** (this can include resting from feeding or playing)

### **Strong Cues**

Crying  
Fussing  
Squirming  
Pulling away  
Coughing/choking  
Back arching  
Turning head away

### **Mild Cues**

Turning eyes away  
Yawning  
Frowning  
Dull looking eyes/face  
Jerky movements  
Grasping own body or clothing

### ***Tips from research:***

- *Babies aren't spoiled by being attended to when they cry. In fact, babies that are attended to tend to cry less.*
- *Babies under 6 months don't cry to 'get at parents' as at this age they don't know parents are there when out of sight.*

