

Early Infancy: Understanding Your Baby's Cues

Who	Postpartum women and their infants, birth to 6 weeks of age, regardless of infant feeding choice. Other family members, such as fathers or grandmothers may also be present. Classes will have 2-12 participants.
Why	Educating parents about normal baby behavior has been shown to result in increased exclusive breastfeeding, decreased formula usage by WIC participants and less overfeeding. When parents understand their baby's cues, they feel more confident in caring for their newborn.
Time	25-30 minutes
Set-up	Chairs set up in a circle or semi-circle
Objectives	By the end of this session, participants will: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe how their baby tries to communicate with them.2. Recognize the following cues:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hunger and fullness• I want to be near you• I need something to be different.3. Identify actions they could take to respond to their babies.
Lesson Overview	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome and Introductions2. Hunger Cues3. Fullness Cues4. Other Cues5. "I need something to be different" Cues6. "I want to be near you" Cues7. Closing

Materials

Materials Needed:

Refer to the Materials Checklist on page 9

Provided by Local Agency:

- DVD player or computer
 - Flip Chart
 - Markers
 - Paper/Pencils/Pens
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Getting Ready

1. Post Class Agenda Poster
 2. Set up DVD player with early infancy class clips
 3. Make copies of handout and put in plastic sleeves for classroom use
 4. Have “Why Do Babies Cry?”, “Understanding Babies Cues”, and “Healthy Sleep For You and Your Baby” handouts and Participant DVDs: *Getting to Know Your Baby* available for participants who did not receive them prenatally
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Activities

1. Welcome & Introduction (2 minutes)

“Congratulations to each of you on the birth of your baby and welcome to today’s class about understanding your baby’s cues. My name is _____ and I will be leading the discussion.”

Option 1:

“Let’s go around the room and have each of you introduce yourself and your baby. If you would like, share your baby’s age and whether you have other children.”

Option 2:

“By a show of hands, how many of you are parents for the first time? How many of you have other children?”

Show Class Agenda Poster (optional)

“Today we will talk about:

- *Communicating with your baby*
 - *Recognizing baby cues*
 - *Responding to baby cues”*
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2. Hunger Cues (3 minutes)

“Babies are born with the ability to communicate. Babies use their bodies and make noises to let their parents know when they need to eat, learn, play or rest. These are called cues. Is it okay if I point out any cues your babies might be showing during our class so we all can see them?” “Pause.

*“Newborn babies are especially good at giving hunger cues, because they need to be fed often due to their very small stomach size. Who would like to share one way **your** baby lets you know he is hungry?”* Affirm responses. (Option: facilitator can list responses on flip chart or display hunger poster from prenatal class)

Possible answers:

- Keep his hands near his mouth
 - Bend his arms and legs
 - Make sucking noises
 - Pucker his lips
 - Search for nipple (root)
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2. Hunger Cues (continued)

Refer to FAQ for what to say if participant answers “cries” or “gets fussy”

“Babies usually give several hunger cues at one time. For example they may suck on their hands, root and make sucking noises all at once.”

Look for babies in class showing hunger cues or demonstrate.

“What questions do you have about hunger cues?” Pause.

3. Fullness Cues (5 minutes)

Pass out handout “Understanding Your Baby’s Cues/What Your Newborn is Saying”:

“This handout lists hunger and fullness cues. You may recognize this information from the 3 handouts and DVD that you received during your prenatal class.” Show handouts and DVD. *“If you did not get either of these, ask me for them after class.”*

“Fullness cues can sometimes be a bit trickier to recognize than hunger cues. Let’s read together the fullness_cues section on the handout.” Point out section on handout and read aloud:

“When your baby is full he may:

- *Suck slower or stop sucking*
- *Relax his hands and arms*
- *Turn away from the nipple*
- *Push away*
- *Fall asleep”*

While reading the list of fullness cues, demonstrate them using your body and hands.

“Let’s watch a video clip of a baby showing that he is full.” Show “Fullness with Narration” clip.

“We will watch the video clip again.” Play the fullness clip without narration. Facilitator will point out fullness cues again as the bottle fed baby demonstrates them. Emphasize that sucking is a reflex, and bottles keep delivering milk, resulting in babies having to swallow.

*“Take a second to think about how **your** baby lets you know he is full. Turn to your neighbor and describe the fullness cues your baby gives you.* Pause 1 minute.

Invite sharing in the larger group.

3. Fullness Cues (continued)

Affirm responses.

“What questions do you have about fullness cues?”

See FAQs for help with common questions. Advise participants with feeding issues or problems to discuss their concerns with a counselor.

4. Other Cues (3 minutes)

“Hunger and fullness cues are only some of the cues that babies give.

Our next video clip talks about the 2 main cues that babies use to communicate their needs. Listen to Dr. Jane describe how babies show you ‘I want to be near you’ and ‘I need something to be different.’ cues.”

Show clip: “Other Cues”.

5. “I need something to be different” Cues (5 minutes)

“Let’s talk more about the cues babies give when they ‘need something to be different.’ Look at the back of your handout. Who would like to read the section: ‘I need something to be different’?”

If no volunteers, the facilitator should read from the handout. (Handout Script)

“Learning is hard work for babies and they can tire quickly. Your baby will show you signs that he needs something to be different. He might:

- *Look away, turn away, or arch his back*
- *Frown or have a glazed look in his eyes*
- *Stiffen his hands, arms or legs*
- *Yawn or fall asleep*

Responding to cues quickly before your baby starts to fuss may help your baby cry less.”

*“Without words your baby can tell you that he needs something to be different. As a parent, you will have to figure out **what** needs to be different.”*

“Now let’s watch another video clip. This mom just breastfed her baby a few minutes ago.” Show “Fussy Baby” clip.

“What did you see the baby doing to let her mom know that she needed something to be different?”

5. “I need something to be different” Cues (continued)

Pause for response. Affirm.

Possible responses are: wiggling, arm and body movements, fussing, and no hunger cues.

“What do you think might be bothering this baby?”

Pause for response. Affirm.

Possible reasons include wet diaper/pooping, needs to pass gas, needs to burp, needs to be held, uncomfortable position.

Then ask, *“What could mom do?”*

Note to facilitator: If someone says baby needs to be fed, talk about the baby not showing hunger cues.

“Newborns may be sensitive to what’s going on inside their bodies. Some babies might get fussy a few minutes after a feeding. Be patient, she may need to burp, pass gas or poop.”

“Babies can also be bothered by what’s going on around them; outside their body. As we watch this next video clip, look for cues that this baby needs something to be different.”

Show “Baby and Sister” clip.

“What did you see the baby doing to show that she needs something to be different before she started to cry?”

Pause for response. Affirm.

Possible responses are furrowed brow, trembling lip, turns head)

“Family, friends, bright lights and noises can overwhelm a new baby.”

“What can you do when you notice your baby is getting overwhelmed by something or someone?”

Invite sharing. Pause for responses. Affirm.

“When your baby starts to get fussy, look to see what’s going on around her. Try turning her away from any activity or noise, and hold her close to your body. This can help prevent some crying.”

“Take a moment to look at your own baby.”

Pause.

5. “I need something to be different” Cues (continued)

“Also, look at the other babies in the room. Are any of the babies showing cues that they need something to be different?”

Wait for responses.

If babies are showing cues ask:

- *“What do you see this baby doing?”*
- *What do you think needs to be different?”*

Encourage the parent to respond to the cue. (If the babies are all sleeping or happy, then invite parents to share as they notice cues. Facilitator should also observe opportunities to point out cues throughout the class.)

“What questions do you have about your baby’s cues that he needs something to be different?” If participant brings up a personal issue or asks a question not related to baby cues, encourage them to discuss this with their WIC counselor.

6. “I want to be near you” Cues (5 minutes)

“Now, let’s talk about cues your baby gives to show he’s ready to interact, learn and play. Look at the section of the handout that says ‘I want to be near you.’”

“Who would like to read the box ‘I Want to be Near You?’”

If no one volunteers, read from the handout.

(Handout Script)

“As your newborn gets older, you will be better able to tell when he is ready to interact, learn or play. He might:

- *Have a relaxed face and body*
- *Follow your voice and face*
- *Reach toward you*
- *Stare at your face*
- *Raise his head”*

*“Now, turn to your neighbor and describe how **your** baby uses cues to let you know that she wants to be near you. How do you respond?”*

Pause 1 minute.

“Who would like to share what you discussed?”

Affirm responses.

6. “I want to be near you” Cues (continued)

“Newborns always need to be close to their parents. When babies give ‘I want to be near you’ cues, this is a special time for you and your baby. It is the perfect time to play, sing, or talk to your baby.”

“It’s important to know that newborn babies tire easily, and this playing and learning time may be very short.”

7. Closing (2 minutes)

“Babies mainly show only 2 types of cues; they either want to be near you and interact or they need something to be different. It’s that simple! As you and your baby get to know each other, you will get better and better at communicating and things will get easier.”

“What is one thing we talked about today that you want to remember?”

Pause and wait for a response.

Invite sharing and affirm.

“What other questions do you have?”

Thank participants and give them the following reminders and instructions:

- Remind participants to leave handouts for next class.
 - Invite participants who didn’t receive the 3 handouts (“Why Do Babies Cry?”, “Understanding Babies Cues”, and “Healthy Sleep For You and Your Baby”) and optional DVD to get one.
 - Remind participants they can ask additional questions about baby behavior at their individual appointment.
 - Instruct participants what they need to do next for the enrollment process.
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Early Infancy Group Education Training Materials Checklist			
Item	Description	Location	
<p>Order Limit: 3 per clinic</p> <p>DVD: Prenatal Class Clips: <i>Understanding Your Baby's Cues</i></p> <p>Item No. 961-971</p>	<p>This DVD contains clips used during Early Infancy group education and is for class use only.</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Request additional copies from Ashley.Sutherland@doh.wa.gov</p>
<p>Participant DVD: Getting to Know Your Baby (English/Spanish)</p> <p>Item No. 961-969</p>	<p>This DVD is used for Early Infancy staff training and group education.</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Request additional copies from Ashley.Sutherland@doh.wa.gov</p>
		<p>Link to "Getting to Know Your Baby" YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX2ijdLnIJ</p>	
<p>Lesson Plan: <i>Understanding Your Baby's Cues</i></p> <p>Item No. 961-988</p>	<p>Lesson plan early infancy group education.</p>	<p>WA WIC Website Baby Behavior Materials</p>	
<p>Posters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Agenda: <i>Baby Cues</i> <p>Item No. 961-980 – English/Spanish</p>	<p>Class visuals</p>	<p>WA WIC Website Baby Behavior Materials</p>	
<p><i>Why Do Babies Cry?</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-316</p>	<p>Participant handout used in class activity</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>

Item	Description	Location	
<p><i>Understanding Your Baby's Cues</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-317</p>	<p>Participant handout used in class activity</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>
<p><i>Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-318</p>	<p>Participant handout used in class activity</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>
<p>Class Handout: Understanding Your Baby's Cues/What is Your Baby Saying</p> <p>Item No. 961-986 – English/Spanish</p>	<p>Handout for use during class. NOT for participants to take home. Protect copies with plastic sleeves so handout can be reused.</p>	<p>WA WIC Website Baby Behavior Materials</p>	

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