

Provider Tip of the Week

February 2, 2022

Crying and Fussiness

As you know, infant crying and fussiness is an expected part of development. However, that doesn't make it any easier for caregivers to manage. You can help build knowledge and understanding around crying and fussiness with these strategies:

1. Promote soothing. Make sure caregivers know that infants cannot be spoiled and need help from their adults (co-regulation) in order to calm down.
2. Encourage caregivers to make sleep a priority. Explain how being overtired can contribute to an infant's mood and fussiness. Encourage families to put their baby down every 1.5-2 hours; have an early "bedtime" even when their baby isn't sleeping through the night; and develop a soothing bedtime routine, like a bath, massage, song or book.
3. Remind caregivers that crying is communication. Have parents try to play detective and figure out what their baby may be feeling. Crying can mean hunger, fatigue, overstimulation, discomfort or pain. When caregivers name these feelings, they help their baby to feel safe and seen, and practice being sensitive to their baby's needs.
4. Encourage caregivers to take a break when they need it. Putting their baby down in a safe space for a few minutes is MUCH safer than attempting to care for a baby when caregivers are upset. Suggest that they call a friend, splash cold water on their face, get a cup of coffee or just take some deep breaths.

See this video for an example from the well child visits:



Watch the Video!

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