

# Getting to Know Your Baby



## Newborns to Age 3 months:

### Making the Case:

- More than 1 million new neuron brain cell connections are formed every second in the first few years of life.
- The early years are the most active period for establishing neural connections, but new connections can form throughout life.
- Responsive, nurturing, serve and return interactions with caregivers play an essential role in supporting healthy brain development.

### Can you try it out?

Does your baby imitate your sticking out your tongue?  
Does your baby gaze at or track your face or a red ball?  
Does your baby turn towards your voice or a rattle?  
Does your baby grab on to your finger?

### What have you discovered about your baby?

Is your baby easily overstimulated or does your baby require a lot of stimulation to connect?

How consolable is your baby when upset? How does your baby let you know they are hungry? tired? uncomfortable?

Have you tried the **5 S's** to calm your crying baby?

Can you identify your baby's *Newborn States*? What state is your baby in now?

Do you believe that you can *spoil* your baby with too much affection?

## Age 4 months:

### What have you discovered about your baby?

How does your baby let you know when they want to *engage* with you? (bright gaze, eye contact, eyebrows lifted, smiling, hands and arms out, grabs fingers)

How does your baby let you know when they want to *disengage* from you? (gaze averted, turns away, eyebrows furrowed, frowns, cries, stiffens, arches)

### Reading Your Baby's Body Language Illustration:

- Ask the parent if they can imitate or label the facial expressions of the mother in each picture? (parent can use a mirror or take pictures on their cell phone to view their own facial expressions)  
(maternal facial expressions include: smiling/surprise face/ empathy *woe* face/ upset face that matches baby)
- What are the baby's facial expressions in each picture?  
(baby facial expressions: smiling/surprise questioning face/ mild sad face/ upset pre-cry face)
- What associated vocal sounds do you think the mother is making in each picture?  
(note that vocal sounds are high pitched for smile and surprise and progressively deeper for woe and upset face)
- What additional body language do you notice? (notice mother's and baby's hand placement and mother's proximity to baby)
- What are the mother and baby thinking and feeling in each picture?

How do *you* respond to your baby's cues?

- *serve and return* is the back and forth interaction between parents and infants such as visual smiling/ vocally using "parentese"/ physically tickling or leaning in and out
- *rupture and repair* are the essential components of relationships. Baby's cues and parent responses are constantly mismatched. The key is trying to make sure that repair follows rupture

## Making the Case





**Swaddling**



**Side or Stomach**



**Shushing**



**Swinging**



**Sucking**



**Swaddling + Shushing  
+ Swinging + Sucking**

## **Calming Your Baby**

## Newborn States



**Deep Sleep**



**Active Sleep**



**Drowsy**



**Quiet Alert**

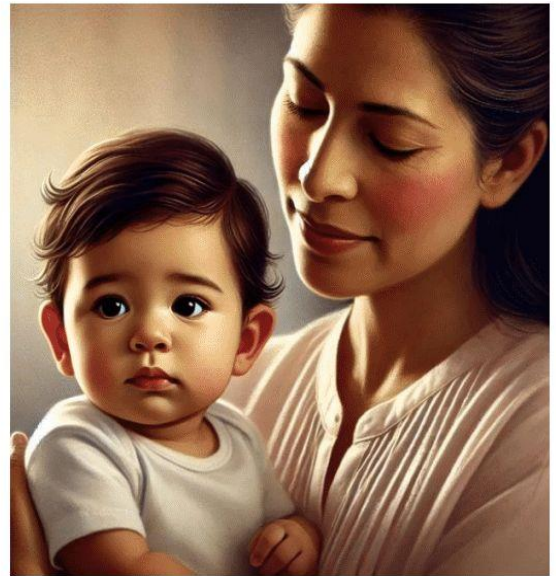


**Active Alert**



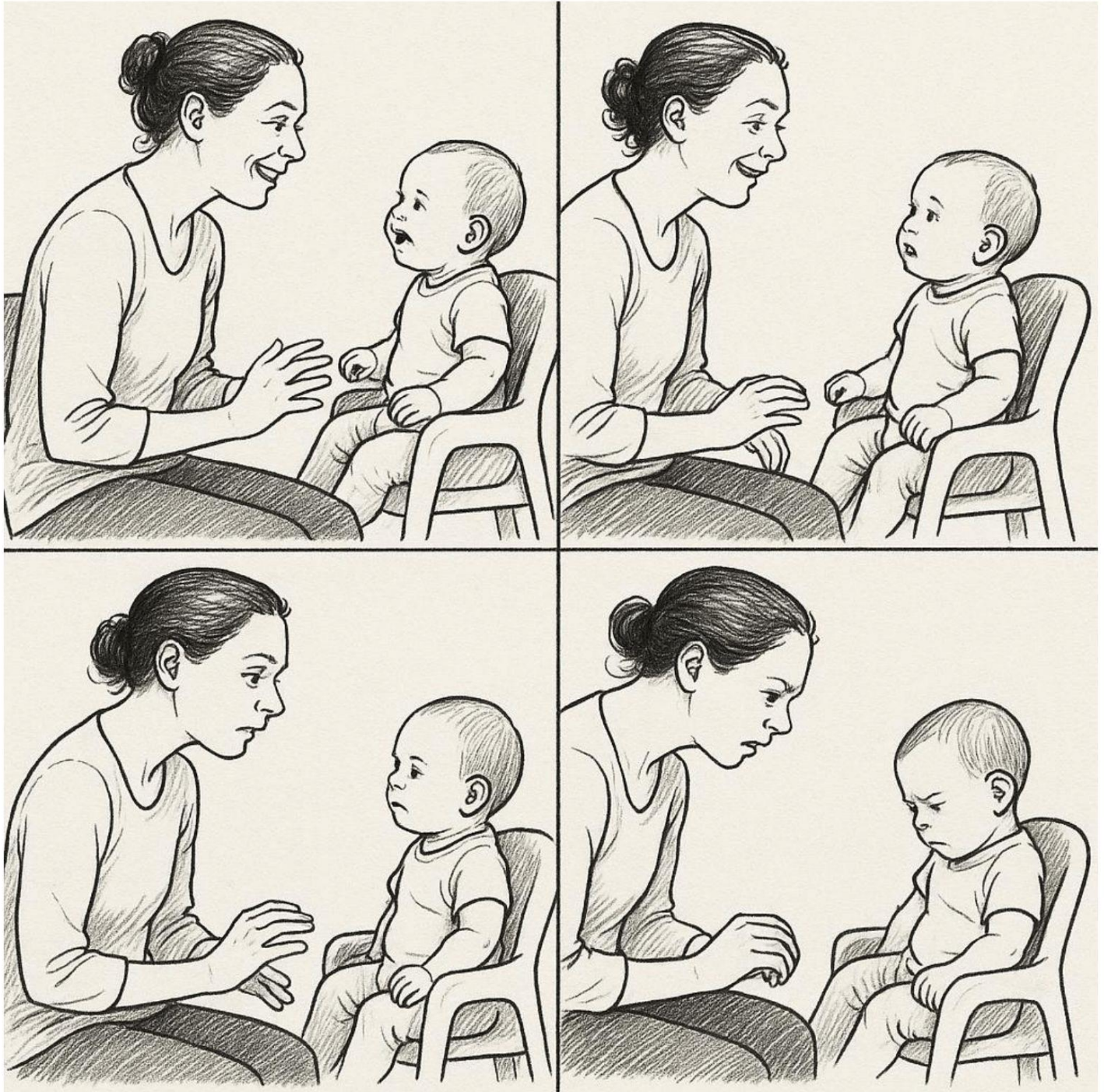
**Crying**

## Engagement and Disengagement



## Reading Your Baby's Social Cues

Note the mother's and baby's facial expressions and body language. What vocal sound do you think the mother is making in each picture? What are the mother and baby feeling and thinking?



## Serve and Return



## Rupture and Repair

