

HUG Your Baby

Help, Understanding, Guidance
for young families



Understanding and Caring for Your Newborn



First two pages of handout

Babies certainly communicate.
If only they could speak our language!

They talk with their bodies, and you can learn
“to hear” and understand their body talk!

There are two skills you can use to help you figure out what your baby is saying:

See your baby send out an SOS (Sign of Over-Stimulation)

See what Zone your baby is in

See your baby send out an SOS

Imagine how busy, exciting, noisy, and stimulating this new world is to your baby. Most babies, especially if born early, can be over-stimulated. And when they are, they send out an **SOS**.



Babies send out an SOS two ways:

Body **SOS** with changes in:

- Skin color (turning red or pale)
- Movement (tremors or jerks of arms or legs)
- Breathing (choppy and irregular)

Behavioral **SOS**:

- “Spacing Out” – When the baby is over-stimulated or upset she may stare off into the distance. How smart she is to Space Out as a way to decrease the stimulation she takes in.
- “Switching Off” – Because your face and voice are so exciting to your baby, if she gets over-stimulated she may just look away from you. She is not mad at you. Again, she is smart enough to know when she’s a bit overloaded with stimulation.
- “Shutting Down” – Some babies can decrease the amount of stimulation they receive by getting very sleepy and even falling asleep. Because a baby needs to conserve energy to grow, Shutting Down can be a smart way to go!



What does a parent do when she sees an SOS?

Decrease stimulation: quieting your voice or even looking away from her momentarily until she calms down. Increase your help: hold his hands to his chest, swaddle him, sway him, and let him suck your finger, breast, or a pacifier (but only after breastfeeding is well established).

