

Why You Should Respond FAST to Your Spirited baby



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Search the internet and you'll repeatedly find the advice; Babies must learn to self soothe. To teach self-soothing skills the advisers insist you must WAIT before responding to your infant's cries. Evidently these individuals have never met a spirited baby at 2:00 AM. You on the other hand know from experience that if you wait to respond to your spirited baby, she becomes so upset she remains awake for the next hour or more! **Your instinct is to respond quickly, but there is that nagging worry that if you do, she will never learn to self-soothe. Let me explain why your instinct is right on!**

1. **Temperament matters:** Spirited infants are genetically wired with an arousal system set to trigger faster than their low-keyed peers. They can rocket from quiet and calm to red-faced screaming in seconds. Once flooded they remain upset for long periods of time.

2. **A quick response prevents flooding:** By catching and responding to the initial subtle changes in their movements, vocalizations, and other signals that they are struggling to self-regulate spirited babies settle faster, allowing everyone to quickly return to sleep.

3. **Responding is not spoiling.** The worry with a quick response is that by doing so you'll spoil your baby or reinforce the crying. Author, Wendy Middlemiss says it well. "Meeting your baby's needs before he gets distressed tunes the baby's body and brain for calmness." Research also tells us that infants whose cries are responded to quickly, ultimately cry less because they learn to trust that their needs will be met.

4. **New skills required supported practice:** Just as your child will need a steady hand on the back of her bicycle as she learns to balance, your baby needs a supportive hand to practice self-soothing. We nudge, not push. You can trust your baby when she let's you know she needs help.

5. **Ease back your support as your baby's self-regulation skill strengthens:** Gradually, you will begin to hear an eh, eh, eh when your baby first awakens. At this point she still has it together. Now you can pause to see what happens next. Listen carefully. If she quiets and returns to sleep celebrate and return to sleep yourself. If she starts to ramp up, respond. Practice is over. But the next time you hear the eh, eh, eh try it again. One day your baby will surprise you by quieting herself!

6. **Never forget You and Your Baby are the true experts:** The reality is there is a great deal of conflicting advice on the internet. **Trust your baby and yourself. Never doubt that responding in the manner that fits your baby is the RIGHT response for you.**

For additional information on Raising Your "Spirited" Baby, check out my latest book.

Do the strategies your friends swear by not work with your baby? Is it nearly impossible to lay your baby down because the moment you lean forward, she startles herself awake? Do the upsets and shrieking come out of seemingly nowhere and take forever to subside?" Welcome to "Raising your Spirited Baby".

"Spirited" babies arrive in this world genetically wired to be alert and intense. Raising them puts parents to the test and takes special skills. With years of research, analysis and working one-on-one with parents, I have developed a five-step plan for success. Any parent can benefit from this book, which not only helps them understand and care for their baby but also care for themselves, including their relationships, which are profoundly changed by life with a baby. You are not alone.

Dr. Mary

RECOMMENDED FOR BABIES 0-18 MONTHS

Raising Your **Spirited Baby**

A BREAKTHROUGH GUIDE TO THRIVING
WHEN YOUR BABY IS *MORE*-ALERT AND INTENSE
AND STRUGGLES TO SLEEP



Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Ed.D.

FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
RAISING YOUR SPIRITED CHILD, WHO HAS HELPED MILLIONS