



## Tips for Growing Your Baby's Brain

### Tip #7: Read Your Baby

All babies show six different states of awareness: deep sleep, light sleep, active alert, quiet alert, fussy, and crying.

**Deep Sleep:** Do not disturb. Baby needs to develop a natural sleep cycle.

**Light sleep:** Squirming, easily awakened. If holding, wait until baby becomes limp and relaxed before putting down. Try not to disturb a baby in light sleep.

**\*\*One exception:** Babies under 8 pounds should not go more than 5 hours between feedings. If sleeping at this time, the baby should be awakened\*\*

**Active alert:** May be over stimulated. Skin tone changes, splayed fingers, jerky motions, hiccups. Hold calmly, talk quietly, take to a quiet room.

**Quiet alert:** Eyes bright and focused. Time to talk and play.

**Fussy:** Starting to cry, whimpering, dissatisfied, wiggling. Needs help. If not hungry, walk around with baby, sing, rock, talk softly. Put baby down, and walk away if you are frustrated.

**Crying:** Not settling down. Hold or carry baby in a sling. Walk and talk quietly.

Each state tells us something different about what the baby needs. Sometimes parents need to step in and help out, and sometimes they need to step back and leave the baby alone for awhile.

When you read your baby's states of awareness and respond appropriately, you are helping your baby's brain grow.

---

Babies in the quiet alert state are ready to learn. This is the time to talk, read, sing, and play games.