INFANT STATES

BIRTH to 6 MONTHS

**CRYING**
- Tears
- Jerky movements
- Color changes
- Muscle tension
- Rapid breathing
- Generally doesn’t respond quickly

**IRRITABLE**
- Lots of movement
- Irregular breathing
- Eyes open, but not focused
- Sometimes fussy
- Sensitive to body and surroundings
- Common before feeding

**QUIET ALERT**
- Little body movement
- Eyes wide open
- Steady, regular breathing
- Very responsive
- Wants to play and interact
- Requires energy and can make babies tired

**DROWSY**
- Variable movement
- Irregular breathing
- Opens and closes eyes
- Tired eyes
- Delayed reaction time

**LIGHT SLEEP** (ACTIVE SLEEP)
- Some movement
- Irregular breathing
- Facial movement
- Rapid eye movement (REM)
- Easily awakened and startled

**DEEP SLEEP** (QUIET SLEEP)
- No body movement
- Regular breathing
- Bursts of sucking
- Not easily awakened

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Infant CUES

ENGAGEMENT CUES
• eyes open
• looks intently at your face
• follows your voice and face
• smiles
• relaxes face
• smooth body movements
• feeding sounds
• rooting

DISENGAGEMENT CUES
• turns or looks away
• pushes away or arches back
• cries
• coughs
• extends fingers with a stiff hand
• yawns or falls asleep
• grimaces
• has a glazed look

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CAREGIVER/PARENT RESPONSE
Time to play or feed (if baby shows hunger cues).
Remember, playing is hard work for baby and baby tires easily.

CAREGIVER/PARENT RESPONSE
Play detective and follow the cues to figure out what needs to be different.


California WIC Program, California Department of Public Health
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