

Parenting in times of stress



Welcoming a new baby

Becoming a parent, or welcoming a new addition to your existing family, is an exciting time. But it can also signal a huge change that many people find overwhelming and stressful. Here's how to give your baby — and you — the best possible start.

Sharing is caring

- Use social media or pick up the phone to connect with people who can offer support
- Accept help and take turns to care for your baby, so that you can have some time to yourself
- Sleep when your baby sleeps so that you have extra energy when they wake up

Entertain your baby

- Get on your baby's level so they can see and hear you
- Sing songs and play music with pots and spoons
- Stack colourful cups or building blocks
- Tell them a story and show them a picture book

Communicate clearly

- Copy the expressions and sounds they make, and react to their babble or words
- Use your baby's name when you speak to them
- Describe what your baby is doing

Learning together

- Make their environment interesting — colourful decorations and different textures will stimulate their senses

- Allow your baby to explore their world through their five senses — sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch

Soothing a crying baby

- Crying is your baby's way of saying that they need comfort and care
- Try to find out what's causing your baby to cry. It might be because they are hungry, tired, too hot or too cold, or their nappy needs to be changed
- Singing a lullaby or playing some gentle music in the background might help distract your baby. A rattle or a mobile hanging above their cot can give them something to look at
- Gently rocking or rhythmically stroking your baby's back can help them to feel calm
- If you are worried, speak to your midwife or a healthcare professional

Be gentle with your children as they learn, but also with yourself as a parent!

Just because something didn't go well today, or you lost your temper, it doesn't define who you are as a parent. Remind yourself of the things you did well, even if they seem small.

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These evidence-based parenting resources were developed by Parenting for Lifelong Health in collaboration with [UNICEF, WHO, and other international agencies](#).