

10 smart tips

to all parents of young children





Dear parents of young children

This little book is a part of Stine Sofie Foreldrepakke, an information program to support you in the parental role.

The 10 smart tips are made for handling demanding situations and preventing incidents that can be unsafe and dangerous for the child.

We recommend visiting our website 10smartetips.no. Here you will find movies, the Oh shit-plan for stressful situations and more information.

Make good use of your conversations with healthcare professionals. They are here to guide you and your child towards a good and safe beginning.

Remember: you are the most important person in your child's life. You can do it!

All the best, Stine Sofies Stiftelse



TIP 1

Talk about your childhood

Your own childhood has a big influence on what sort of a parent you become. Reflect on and talk about your upbringing and what you want – and don't want – to pass on to your own child.

Advice

- Think through your own childhood.
- Write down what you want – and don't want – to pass on to your child.
- Share what you've written with your partner, midwife, doctor or somebody at the health clinic.

Remember

- Infants need security and love.
- If you lacked this in your own upbringing, it can be hard to give it to your own child. Talk about this, that'll make it easier to understand how your childhood has affected you.

*Read more about tip no. 1 and watch the theme film
«Think and talk» on 10smartetips.no.*



TIP 2

Talk about your expectations

A new baby arouses fresh thoughts, feelings and expectations in many people. Talk about this with your partner, health personnel or others you trust.

Advice

- Talk about what you're looking forward to and what you're dreading.
- Think through how you're going to divide your time between job, family and personal life.
- Are you a couple expecting a child? Talk with each other about your expectations so that you're better coordinated.

Remember

- Your time as parents of an infant is exciting, but also hectic and demanding. It's quite normal to feel both joy and dread.
- There are no ready answers, but talking about your expectations can make you better prepared.

*Read more about tip no. 2 and watch the theme film
«Think and talk» on 10smartetips.no.*

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TIP 3

Speak out if you're unhappy

Having both positive and negative thoughts about becoming a parent is normal. Be open, and devote time to dealing with your thoughts and feelings in order to become more confident about and prepared for the parental role.

Advice

- If you think life is especially burdensome, tell somebody about it.
- Asking for help shows strength.
- You can get good support and guidance from health personnel.

Remember

How you feel affects the whole family. It is natural to have some mood swings. If you experience a lack of joy in life, or if you feel depressed, sad, anxious or irritable over time, you may need help. Both men and women can become depressed both before and after the baby is born.

*Read more about tip no. 3 and watch the theme film
«Think and talk» on 10smartetips.no.*



**Make your own
Oh shit-plan
at page 26**

TIP 4

Draw up an Oh shit-plan

Life as the parents of infants has its challenges. Draw up a plan for responding to such demands, which also lists where you can find help.

Advice

- Be aware of what could make you feel stressed, such as not enough food or sleep.
- Create and use an Oh shit-plan which covers the sensible things to do when the demands pile up, and which people bring you relief when its needed.

Remember

If you recognise the signs that you're getting stressed, it's easier to make the right choices before your feelings take control.

*Read more about tip no. 4 and watch the theme film
«Think and talk» on 10smartetips.no.*



TIP 5

Infants cry to get help

Crying is a baby's way of communicating.
They cry to tell you that they need help.
Feel your way – you'll eventually become an expert on what your child needs.

Advice

- If a crying baby makes you so cross or stressed that it's difficult to think straight, put your child gently in a safe place for a few minutes.
- Use this time to relax before you try to console it again.
- Ask for guidance at the health centre if it happens several times.

Remember

Babies usually cry the most in their first six weeks of life. After 12 weeks, most usually cry a lot less. Babies sometimes cry even though you've done all you can to console them. It's normal then to feel despair and frustration. This doesn't mean you're a bad parent or that you've got a difficult child.

*Read more about tip no. 5 and watch the theme film
«Crying and comforting» on 10smartetips.no.*

Checklist for when your baby cries

Hungry?

Babies younger than four months old need feeding every two-four hours around the clock. All infants have periods of the day when they feed more frequently.

Wind?

Many babies have problems with wind (air trapped in stomach and intestines). That can be painful. Careful stomach massage is a fine technique for getting the baby to break wind.

Need for closeness?

The child needs to feel safe. To understand that you are nearby, the child needs to see or feel you.

Dirty nappy?

Check and change as required.

Tired, stressed or over-stimulated?

A newborn baby needs to sleep an average of 13-17 hours per day. They often get tired after being awake one-two hours.

Pain?

Check whether the baby appears to be uncomfortable. Should the amount of crying be unusually high, or you fear this could be due to illness, you must see a doctor.

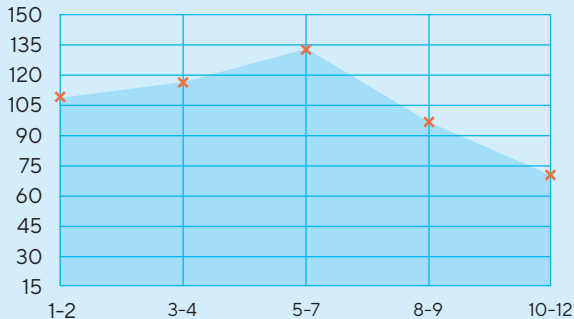
Food intolerance or allergy?

Nicotine, caffeine and reactions to certain foods can increase crying. Contact a doctor or health center for advice.

If you are unsure or concerned about your child's crying or restlessness, you should talk to a healthcare professional.

Minutes with crying

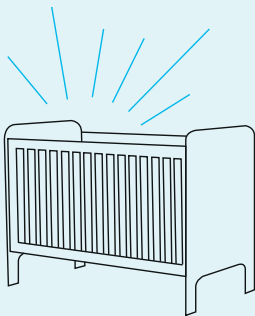
All infants are different, and vary in their crying patterns. It is normal for crying to increase over the first six weeks. At peak, the baby normally cries for two hours and 15 minutes a day on average. After six weeks, crying gradually reduces and is down to an average of one hour and 10 minutes a day by week 12.



Age in
weeks

Ref: Wolke et. al. 2017

*At 10smartetips.no you can read about «Eight steps for comforting»
- a step-by-step way to provide comfort as needed.*



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TIP 6

Frustration and powerlessness are normal

Anger, frustration and a sense of powerlessness are normal feelings which affect all parents. If you lose control, it can be unsafe or dangerous for the child, for yourself and for others.

Advice

- Imagine you have a camera filming you at home.
- Feelings you display to your baby are going to be seen by other adults, and by the child itself when it gets older.
- Ask yourself what they would think if they saw the film.

Remember

Breathing exercises can calm you down and subdue negative thoughts and concerns. Are you finding it hard to get your feelings under control? Tell somebody else – a lot of good help is available.

Read more about tip no. 6 and watch the theme film «Crying and comforting» on 10smartetips.no.



TIP 7

Sleep when you can

Sleeping well is important for the infant's development and your ability to care for it. You get less sleep with a baby in the house. Rest when it's asleep, and ensure you get a respite when it's needed.

Advice

- Create a division between day and night – that can contribute to good sleep quality.
- Activity and natural light during the day will improve the quality of your sleep at night.
- By all means use the «Eight steps for comforting» and the film on Comforting which you can find at 10smartetips.no.

Remember

A newborn baby needs to sleep an average of 13-17 hours per day. They can get tired after being awake one-two hours. If it's awake too long, the child can get overtired and overstimulated.

Read more about tip no. 7 and watch the theme film «Brain building and relationships» at 10smartetips.no.



TIP 8

Build your infant's brain

Observe, talk, sing and play with your baby. That builds its brain. Turn everyday tasks like meals and nappy-changing into brain-building activities.

Advice

- Follow your baby's eyes and talk about what you both see («that building block is nice – do you want it?»).
- Name and accept the baby's feelings («it's OK to get impatient when there's a long wait»).
- Ask for help at the clinic if interaction is proving difficult.

Remember

The time from conception until the infant reaches the age of two is particularly important for its development. During this period, the child needs good and stable adults around it to develop as well as possible. You are your child's most important brain-builder.

Read more about tip no. 8 and watch the theme film «Brain building and relationships» at 10smartetips.no.



TIP 9

Help each other to perform well as parents

One of the best things you can give your child is a positive relationship between you as parents. And if you're on your own, involving other people is a good idea for both you and your baby.

Advice

- Get a babysitter every so often.
- A couple of hours together in a cafe, in the countryside or in the bedroom can work wonders. Involve other people.
- Create a network of people you like being with.

Read more about tip no. 9 and watch the theme film «Brain building and relationships» at 10smartetips.no.

Remember

Parenting is not a competition to be the best, or to do the same amount of the same thing. It is the most important teamwork in the world! Show gratitude for each other's efforts – and make each other good.

Alone with your child?

It is important for both your child and yourself to let other people in. Your child needs to see you interacting with others to learn how to interact themselves.



TIP 10

Be a good and trusted caregiver

You are the most important person in your child's life.

What you do and say leaves its mark – for better or worse. You need to know what could harm your child and how to deal with difficult demands.

Advice

- Think about how you react when you get cross, stressed or frustrated.
- Do you do or say things which aren't good for you or your child?
- Remember that help is available.

Remember

Injuring or abusing a child is illegal in Norway. It's in the Norwegian constitution, and in the UN convention on the rights of the child. Any form of violence in childhood can lead to physical and mental health problems and challenges later in life.

Read more about tip no. 10 and watch the theme film «Brain building and relationships» at 10smartetips.no.

oh shit!

PLAN FOR STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

The baby does not stop crying

Try to ...

- Change the diaper
- Check if the baby is too hot or too cold
- Give them food
- Hold and comfort
- Check if the child is tired

This is what I can do to comfort:

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Here I can lay the child safely down:

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I get angry and frustrated...

- Put the child down safely
- Walk away from the child
- Do not shout at the child
- Exit the room and catch your breath
- Take deep breaths with your belly

I calm down if:

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I need help

- I have called and talked to someone about being stressed or frustrated
- I have agreed that someone else can take care of the child so that I can take a break

If I need relief or someone to talk to, I have agreed that I can call:

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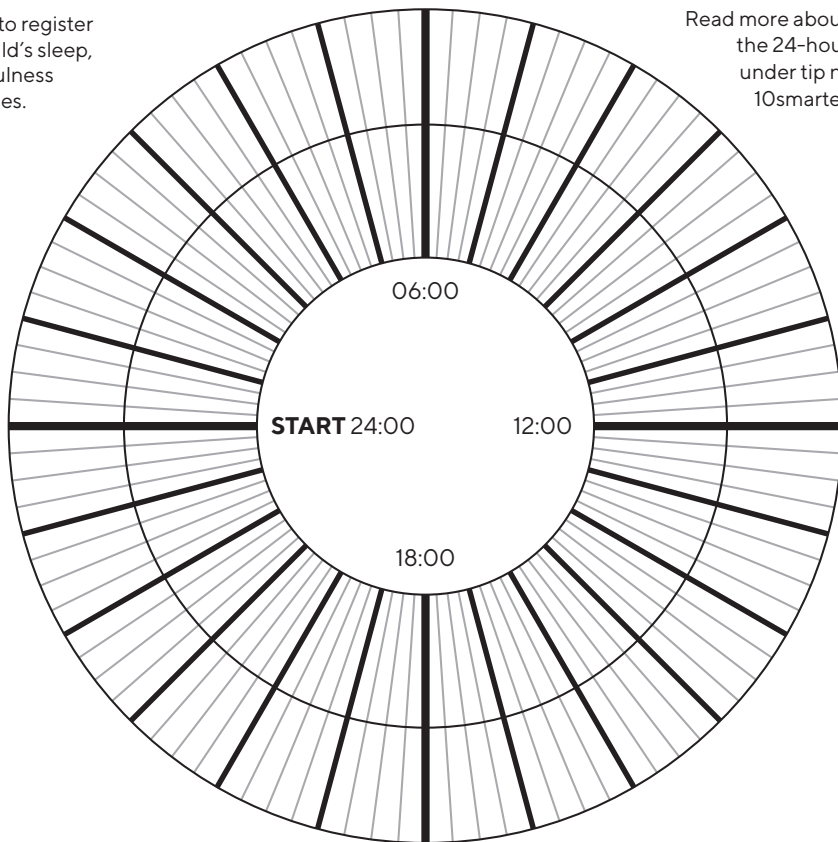
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24-hour clock

A tool to register the child's sleep, wakefulness and cries.

M = milk / breastfeeding
N = Nappy change

Read more about using the 24-hour clock under tip no. 5 on 10smartetips.no



BLUE Sleeping **GREEN** Awake, calm, satisfied **YELLOW** Awake, restless, dissatisfied **RED** Crying

Notes

Notes



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