

All About Crying: Birth to 30 Months



As a parent or caregiver of a baby or toddler, you expect to hear crying. But do you know how much? The answer depends on the child's age and the reason behind the tears.

Here are some general guidelines:

Birth to 6 Months: Your baby usually cries to express a need for comfort. Your child may be wet, hungry, thirsty, hurting, sleepy or lonely. Expect crying spells to last up to two hours daily. Most normal crying increases toward the end of the day.

If your baby has **colic**—sudden and intense crying that can last for several hours—look for improvements by four months of age.

6 Months to 12 Months: Your baby realizes now that crying gets a reaction from you. But there can be another reason for tears. This is when your infant may be teething. And don't be surprised if you see your baby's personality changing. Your formerly sweet baby may turn into a big crier while a previously no-fuss infant can produce champion crying jags.

12 to 24 months: Time for tantrums. Meltdowns can be triggered because your child wants to pursue an activity or object or prefers to escape your demand to do something. This is also the age your toddler may feel independent one minute and needy the next. Your child has strong feelings that may be difficult to communicate. Crying is easier.

24 to 30 Months. Expect more tantrums as your toddler pushes boundaries and develops new coping skills. This is also when your son or daughter toys with a sense of control, so anticipate a lot of crocodile tears. Your child may also be sensitive to other children's emotions and cry when they do.

Learn what your child's cries mean to best console him or her.



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1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline