

# Heart-Powered Parenting Playbook



**Your guide to  
enjoying your baby**

## **Introduction to “Heart-Powered Parenting Playbook”**

You’re exhausted, drained, and anxious. You just want to make the right choices for your baby - about where he should sleep, what ‘food’ he should have, whether to let him cry it out or not (and for how long), etc.

Of course you want to do the best for your baby! That’s what most of the inner turmoil is about, isn’t it. Along with a bit of inner crying out, “I just want some good sleep!” and “I want some time to myself!”

Well, the trick is that the stress and exhaustion literally affect the function of your brain and make it hard to remember (how many times have you forgotten where you put something?) and to think clearly (does your mind feel like cotton – or like peanut butter?).

If you want to give your baby the best, guess where you have to start. That’s right: with you!

### **But I don’t have time!**

Do you ever hold your baby? Then you have enough time.

Do you change your baby’s diaper? Then you have enough time.

Do you feed your baby? Then you have enough time.

*The things I am going to suggest take no extra time out of your day.* It’s part of what you already do. How simple and sweet is that?

### **Here are three simple no-extra-time-necessary tricks!**

#### **Trick #1 - “Getting to know you...”**

Knowing what your baby likes and dislikes – before he howls. One of the simplest ways to reduce stress for you and your baby is to get a hint of what’s going on in his mind. How?

You may already know – or have a good idea of – when your baby is happy or unhappy. Some things are obvious. If he is crying, he is unhappy. If he is smiling, he is happy.

But there are all kinds of degrees in between.

And if you're the parent of a baby who cries so much that you can't tell which end is up, here are some hints for you.

**Baby's Readiness Cues – Easy to See\***

Stilling – stops moving  
Looking at your face  
Smooth movements  
Reaching out to you  
Turning toward you  
Smiling  
Feeding sounds  
Cooing  
Bubbling/talking

**Baby's Readiness Cues – Not so Easy to See\***

Eyes wide and bright  
Face bright  
Raising head

**Baby's Unreadiness Cues – Easy to See\***

Turning head away  
Crying/fussiness  
Coughing/choking  
Back arching  
Falling asleep  
Squirming or kicking  
Pulling away  
Pale or red skin  
Spitting up/vomiting

**Baby's Unreadiness Cues – Not so Easy to See\***

Turning eyes away  
Fast breathing  
Yawning  
Wrinkled forehead  
Dull looking eyes  
Frowning  
Hand to mouth  
Hiccoughs

\*Learned from Kalena Babeshoff (Foundation for Healthy Family Living, [www.HealthyFamily.org](http://www.HealthyFamily.org))

These cues are also on separate pages at the end of this “Happy Parent Happy Baby – Easy Guide.” You can print them out and hang them up on your refrigerator or in one (or more) other places to remind you.

An example. If you’re talking and playing with your baby – and your baby’s eyes look away, it is an indication that he has had enough for now. “For now” might mean a few seconds. So just pause. He may simply be integrating what just happened. If he looks at you again and his eyes are bright with anticipation, he’s ready for more. If he keeps his eyes turned away – or if he looks at you but his eyes are less bright or are glazed – he has had enough. You can try the activity later that day or another day.

## **Trick #2 – Recharging the battery**

If your car battery runs dry, can it start your car? Of course not! And you know that.

What about when it comes to your life? And especially when it comes to taking care of your baby?? If you have no juice, how much can you give to your baby (I mean this metaphorically – whether or not you are a breastfeeding mother or a father)?

You can push to some extent. Of course! And often enough, with a baby, you have to.

But wouldn’t it be nice to have more ‘juice’ to give to your baby?

### *How do you increase your juice?*

One of the simplest ways is to acknowledge yourself, as well as your baby. Notice what your little one is doing – looking at you, looking at a picture, etc. – and verbalize it. For example, “I see you are looking at my face.” Or, “I see you are looking at the picture of \_\_\_\_\_.”

And notice what **you** are doing or have done – got out of bed when you’d rather sleep; spent time gazing at or playing with your baby; massaged your baby’s hands or feet or tummy; took a nap with your baby. Notice it and acknowledge yourself for it. Tell yourself, “Well done!”

Sure you'll make mistakes. Acknowledge them, apologize (once only!) if you need to, and then move on. Focusing on them will only deplete you.

Instead, focus more on what you are doing well – or at least on your effort. For example, if you burned the dinner, at least acknowledge yourself for trying to cook it!

When should you acknowledge yourself? Here are some opportunities:

While you're holding your baby

As you go to sleep at night

While you are brushing your teeth

When you go to the bathroom – even if your baby is with you.

Pick a time and try it. See if you can remember to do some acknowledgements each day – and notice how you feel overall after a week of doing this.

### **Trick #3 – Stay “online” with your baby!**

The third way to lower stress and get to know what your baby needs is to learn to connect with your baby even when he is crying and you're stressed out.

We are social creatures. Feeling disconnected increases our stress.

Although we may not be able to completely eliminate all the stressors, we can at least lower stress by finding ways to connect even in the midst of the stress.

One way to do this is to be aware of your heart connection with your baby. Here are four steps to help you strengthen your awareness of that precious heart connection:

- a. Some time when things are sweet and peaceful, notice how your heart feels. Does it feel warm and full? Describe what you notice.
- b. At that time, be aware of (or imagine) a connection between your heart and your baby's heart. You might imagine a golden light, a rainbow, a path of roses - or simply have a sense of that bond of love.
- c. When your baby is crying, remember that bond of love, that connection between your heart and your baby's heart. With little

babies, you can hold your little one close, like when breastfeeding or bottle feeding; or hold your baby on your outstretched arm, face to face.

- d. When your baby is crying, say out loud, “I’m sorry you’re having a hard time. I don’t know what the problem is, but I’m doing my best to figure it out (or “I know that your diaper is wet and you don’t like that, so I’m taking care of it as soon as I can”). I love you no matter what, and we will get through this together.

### Summary of Tricks

This may seem like a lot, but it’s three simple steps:

1. ***Develop your awareness*** of your baby’s willingness and unwillingness cues
2. ***Acknowledge yourself*** for your efforts
3. ***Focus on the connection*** of love, both when things are peaceful and also when you or your baby is upset.

With these simple tools, you and your baby will lower stress and learn to relax. You’ll get to know your baby’s needs. You’ll be able to think more clearly and be more in touch with your intuition. You and your baby will sleep better. Your baby will eat better and smile more. What a great foundation for your relationship and for your baby’s life!



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# Baby's Unreadiness Cues\*



## Easy to See

**Turning head away**

**Crying/fussiness**

**Coughing/choking**

**Back arching**

**Falling asleep**

**Squirming or kicking**

**Pulling away**

**Pale or red skin**

**Spitting up/vomiting**

## Not so Easy to See

**Turning eyes away**

**Fast breathing**

**Yawning**

**Wrinkled forehead**

**Dull looking eyes**

**Frowning**

**Hand to mouth**

**Hiccoughs**

\*Kalena Babeshof Foundation for Health Family Living



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### Easy to See

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**Looking at your face**

**Smooth movements**

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**Turning toward you**

**Smiling**

**Feeding sounds**

**Cooing**

**Burbling/talking**

### Not so Easy to See

**Eyes wide and bright**

**Face bright**

**Raising head**

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