

# How I Feel

Like adults, infants and toddlers have complex emotions. However, they do not yet understand what they are feeling and how to express it to you. As they grow and develop, they learn how to identify the wide range of human emotions and how to cope with them. Additionally, they become aware that other people have feelings too. As a caregiver, you can learn to interpret and understand what they are feeling, provide the appropriate names, and model ways to respond to their emotions. Below is a list of ways your baby is showing his or her emotions.



## Children from birth to 6 months old

- I show pleasure and excitement when I see caregivers.
- I may seem wary of unfamiliar people, places, and activities.
- I love to repeat my actions over and over.
- I am delighted when people or things respond to my efforts.
- I am frustrated and angry when I can't make things happen and don't know why.

## Children from 6 to 12 months old

- I feel secure with familiar people and may show anxiety around strangers.
- I am generally happy and self-assured.
- I show anger by stomping my feet and hitting.
- I show affection to my caregivers and other familiar people.


## Children from 12 to 24 months old

- I show delight and pride in my achievements.
- I feel fear and anger but may try to hold back my tears.
- I want to explore my independence.
- I have a true "personality."
- I may separate willingly from my caregiver, especially if prepared in advance.

## Children from 24 to 36 months old

- I am aware of myself and of my actions with others.
- I know that I am the same and different from others.
- I show empathy with how others feel.
- I sometimes hurt others intentionally.
- I am learning to share.

Adapted with permission from the "What I Am Like" handout created by the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) project at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

 For more information on child development, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eicclearinghouse.org>.

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