

## Cue Glossary

**cues**—verbal and non-verbal behaviors that communicate an infant’s wants and needs. Definitions of the less well-known cues are listed below.

### Potent Engagement Cues

**feeding sounds**—rhythmical sounds infants make during feeding as they compress their lips around the nipple and coordinate sucking, swallowing, and breathing.

**looking at caregiver’s face**—infant looks in the direction of the caregiver’s face. This may result in mutual gaze when the caregiver and infant look for extended periods of time.

**smooth movements of arms and legs**—movement of the infant’s arms and legs generally toward the caregiver, that are smooth (as opposed to jerky) and rhythmical in nature.

### Subtle Engagement Cues

**eyes wide and bright**—eyes open and focused with a sparkling appearance.

**face bright**—increased muscle tone of face possibly with flushing to cheeks. Face bright combined with eyes wide and bright are usually seen as part of alerting.

**feeding posture**—infant’s upper arms adducted and lower arms held closely into abdominal area. Hands are often joined over the torso or stomach area and may be accompanied by finger manipulation. Seen in newborns toward the middle of feeding as they become satiated.

**hunger posture**—upper arms adducted, elbow flexed tightly, forearms raised and pronated. Hands (open or fisted) are held palms forward, under the chin, and sometimes with wrist extension. Often seen at the beginning of the feeding signaling a readiness to eat. May also be a disengagement cue, i.e. a hungry baby will disengage from social interaction to engage in the feeding situation.

**raising head**—elevation of head with eyes directed upwards towards caregiver.

### Potent Disengagement Cues

**cry face**—a combination of many subtle disengagement cues; face sobers, frown begins to form and deepens as brow knits, eyes close partially as upper cheeks raise and become flushed, lower lip quivers, lip retracts as mouth opens, finally, mouth turns down.

**fussiness**—short, broken-up, low pitched vocalization, not rhythmical.

**halt hand**—extending the fingers and wrist; and moving the gesture toward an unwanted object.

**pulling away**—removing torso and/or head away from caregiver or object i.e., withdrawing and increasing distance from caregiver or object.

### Subtle Disengagement Cues

**dull-looking face/eyes**—face shows little or no expression and the eyes appear unfocused with a glazed, heavy-lidded look.

**facial grimace**—combination of a frown, eye tightening, and upper lip raising.

**fast breathing**—increase in the rate and intensity of air passing through the infant’s nose or mouth.

**hand-behind-head** and **hand-to-ear**—tonic neck reflex-related behaviors.

**hiccoughs**—a discharge behavior which reflects the newborn's handling of external and internal stimulation. Thought to occur when infants have more stimulation than they can cope with.

**lip grimace**—open-mouth smile, with lips retracted to side; lips not raised as in smile, but straight across.

**looking away**—eyes turned away from the caregiver or object.

#### **Hunger Cues**

**clenched fingers and fists over chest and tummy**—part of hunger posture.

**flexed arms and legs**—adduction of the arms and legs. Part of hunger posture.

**mouthing**—opening and closing of the mouth simulating sucking or eating.

**rooting**—turning toward stimulated side and sucking.

#### **Satiation Cues**

**arms and legs extended**—opposite of flexion. Indicates a relaxed state in the infant.

**arms straightened along sides**—a sleep related cue indicating a drowsy state.

**finger extension**—fingers straightened, may be hyperextended, can be one or all five fingers.

**pushing away**—extending the arm and making manual contact with the caregiver or object.

#### **Other Definitions:**

**contingency**—when the caregiver responds appropriately and in time to behavior(s) from the infant.

**mutual gaze**—when the caregiver and infant gaze at one another's face and into each other's eyes for a sustained period of time.

**satiated**—refers to when the infant's hunger is satisfied fully or is full after eating.