

Crying for no obvious reason

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Non-specific crying during the first few months of life can make parents insecure for a long time. Because they cannot find any reason for the crying and because it becomes worse each week, they assume naturally that they are doing something wrong while caring or dealing with their children.

In societies where infants are in close physical contact with their mothers and other close adults, there is less of this kind of non-specific crying. When we consider that the human infant has been carried around by its mother throughout the whole of human history, we must seriously ask ourselves, whether many children are able to manage in the first few months of their lives without constant physical contact with their mothers and other familiar adults.

Being left lying for hours as has been the custom with us since the beginning of industrialisation, i.e. for about 150 years, might have created a physiologically unnatural situation for the human infant which finds its expression in non-specific crying. A recent study has shown, that repeated carrying for three hours per day leads to a considerable reduction of crying. It is important, though, that one should not start carrying the baby when it is crying, but that the carrying is spread over the whole day. Repeated physical contact and frequent stimulation of the organs for movement and balance seem to rhythmically influence the various bodily functions which in turn lead to reduced crying. Children who are carried around more do not sleep more or less than other children, but they



fall asleep more easily. They are also more alert and interested in their surroundings. In societies where children cry less, infants are not only carried more than here, they are also breastfed far more often.

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