

Seeing the Baby – Prompts to Help You Notice, Understand, and Connect

A shared guide for parents and professionals

“Seeing the baby” means noticing how the baby communicates, understanding their experience, and recognising them as a unique individual – all through curious observation of their behaviour.

1. Start by seeing the whole baby

- What state is the baby in right now (sleeping, alert, unsettled, engaged)?
 - What might the baby be communicating through their behaviour?
 - If I pause and imagine the baby’s experience, what might this moment feel like for them?
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2. What is the baby’s body telling me?

- Are the baby’s body and limbs relaxed, still, or tense and active?
 - Do the movements look organised and settled, or restless and overwhelmed?
 - What patterns do I notice when the baby is comfortable versus uncomfortable?
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3. What is the baby’s physiology telling me? (breathing, skin, colour)

- Is the baby’s breathing steady, irregular, fast, or effortful?
 - Is there anything I notice about skin colour or tone that reflects how the baby is coping?
 - Do I see signs of calm regulation or stress activation?
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4. How is the baby connecting with people and the environment?

- Is the baby able to make eye contact or engage with a face?
 - Can the baby attend to a voice, or do they need reduced input right now?
 - Is the baby moving towards connection or away from it – and what might that tell me?
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5. How does the baby respond to everyday experiences?

- How does the baby respond to touch (e.g. nappy change, being held, being dressed)?
 - How does the baby respond to sound or noise in the environment?
 - How does the baby respond to light, faces, or visual stimulation?
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6. What helps the baby feel safe, calm, and regulated?

- What signs show that the baby is beginning to settle or feel more organised?
 - Are there specific positions, voices, or rhythms that support regulation?
 - What helps the baby recover after distress or overwhelm?
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7. Seeing the baby as an individual

- What feels unique about this baby’s way of communicating?
- What preferences or patterns have I noticed over time?
- What moments feel meaningful, connected, or important with this baby?