



Ideas for Providing Comfort and Calming at the Basic Emotional Level

- **Touch.** Try to incorporate some simple massage with baby lotion into daily routines (foot, hand, neck, shoulders).
- **Tone of voice.** Calm, loving, affectionate. Take the question mark out of any instructions, but leave in the warmth and affection.
- **Facial expression.** What you are feeling will show on your face. Children become experts at reading subtle signs of irritation and these signs may agitate and disorganize them.
- **Music.** Simple familiar melodies can be very effective at comforting and calming. Choose one or two songs you like and sing them regularly at happy times. They will acquire the ability to calm and comfort at less happy times.
- **Smell.** Your own scent will eventually be paired with comfort and can be a powerful support to the child, so try to keep it clear and consistent (use the same soaps, creams, perfume, etc. every day).
- **Rocking, other rhythmic motion.** Holding and rocking a crying child can help you calm down too.
- **Routines.** Consistent, regular daily routines help the child develop a sense of control through predictability. Do the same things in the same order and find loving "rituals" to associate with routines - especially those dealing with separation (like drop off at child care and saying goodnight).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your most powerful tool in helping a child through difficult times is your own emotional state. Make sure you have sources of emotional support and keep a good supply of positive emotion coming in. Then you can "share" your calm, confident state of mind with the child. Find things you like and enjoy doing with this child and then spend time doing those things. It is important to understand that every child *needs* loving support and comfort even though he or she might not act like it.