



Happy Babies, the Basics

We all know that no one escapes difficult times, and that no one gets to be happy every moment of every day. When we as parents say that one of the things that we want most for our children is for them to be happy, maybe what we are really saying is that we hope that our children will have much more contentment and joy, much less strife and sadness.

Here are three things that we as parents can do, or consciously do more of, to help support our child's happiness every single day:

- *Basic Needs:*

Happiness begins when babies and children can trust that their little worlds are safe. When a parent does their best to respond quickly to their baby's cues for comfort, food, and rest, they are providing their child with the basic building block for happiness.



- *Smiles:*

When a baby smiles at a parent and the parent returns the smile, this quiet communication releases chemicals in the body that make them both feel happier. This chemical also influences how a baby's brain grows and develops.

- *Empathy:*

Experiencing difficult emotions is a normal part of daily life for little ones. Our job as parents is to support our baby's emotions. The next time your child is upset, practice slowing down, imagining how they feel, supporting them through it. When we allow a safe space for sadness, frustration, even anger, we deepen our child's understanding of their humanity and expand their ability to experience joy.



References: *What's in a Smile*. (N.D.). <https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/connecting-communicating/bonding/whats-in-a-smile>; *Teaching Your Child the Art of Happiness*. AHA Parenting. (N.D.). <https://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/emotional-intelligence/happiness>; Maslow, Abraham. (N.D.). *The Pursuit of Happiness: Bringing the Science of Happiness to Life*. <https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/abraham-maslow/>