

# Prenatal Baby Behavior Role Play Activity-A

UPDATED APRIL 2022

## Introduction:

This is the parent's first baby. The parent is interested in learning but doesn't know what to expect or what to ask.

**NOTE:** For this interaction you will use the [Getting to Know Your Baby](#) (Baby Behavior Brochure) and the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) videos.

**CPA:** Hi Allison! Wow, you're already 8 months along. This baby is going to be here soon!

**Allison:** Yes, this pregnancy has gone fast. I can't believe that in only a month the baby will be here.

**CPA:** Having a baby is a very exciting time. Many moms have questions about what to expect in the first few weeks from their newborns. What questions might you have?

**Allison:** I don't know--I haven't really thought about what it will be like when the baby is here. I guess I really don't have any questions.

**CPA:** There are so many things to think about during your pregnancy, that you hardly have time to think about what it's going to be like to have that baby home.

Would you like to spend a few minutes talking about newborn baby behavior, such as how babies sleep, so you know what to expect when your baby arrives? Or we can talk about something else if you prefer.

**Allison:** Sure. I'm ok with talking about babies and sleep.

## Sleep:

**CPA:** A lot of pregnant moms tell me that they hear a lot from others about how baby's sleep. What have you heard about babies and sleep?

**Allison:** Well, my friend who just had a baby says that her baby wakes up all the time at night and likes to sleep during the day. She also says she has to hold her when she's sleeping and can't lay her down because she wakes up when she lays her down. That kind of worries me.

**CPA:** Sounds like your friend is in the thick of things. And I can see why you might be worried. One thing you might want to remember when your baby arrives is that babies sleep differently than adults.

Your baby will go through periods of light sleep and deep sleep. Both types of sleep are important for your baby's health.

Let's watch a video of a baby in light sleep so you can see what I'm talking about.

[Show the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "Light Sleep"]

**CPA:** In **light sleep** babies are dreaming. Dreaming is important because during this time your baby's brain is very active. This helps your baby's brain grow and develop. Babies will wake up easily when they are in light sleep.

During **deep sleep** your baby's brain and body are resting. Would you like to see a video of deep sleep?

**Allison:** Sure.

[Go over signs of deep sleep in the [Getting to Know Your Baby](#) (Baby Behavior Brochure) or show the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "Deep Sleep"]

**CPA:** Newborn babies will fall asleep in light sleep and then after about 20 minutes they will move into deep sleep.

Some babies will wake up easily if you try to lay them down in light sleep—in fact this might be what your friend is experiencing. If this happens, wait until deep sleep before laying your baby down.

**Allison:** So, if my baby wakes up when I lay her down, I just need to hold her until she's in deep sleep.

**CPA:** You got it!

**Allison:** Well, that's kinda cool. I'll have to tell my friend that she should pay attention to this with her baby.

## Waking:

**CPA:** Another thing I hear from parents is that their baby waking at night is the hardest part about being a new parent. It sounds like your friend is experiencing some of this right now.

**Allison:** Yes, she said she didn't realize how hard it was going to be to wake up all the time at night.

**CPA:** Waking up keeps babies safe and healthy and this waking is completely normal. Why do you think a baby might need to wake up at night?

**Allison:** Well, I suppose they have to eat. In fact, I heard that if you breastfeed, your baby is waking up all the time.

**CPA:** Babies tummies are very tiny, so they need to wake often to eat. They will wake often to eat whether you are breastfeeding or formula feeding.

Babies might also wake because they are too hot or too cold, or if they need you for some reason.

**Allison:** Ok, so it's totally normal for babies to wake at night.

**CPA:** It's totally normal and it keeps your baby healthy. So, you need to expect that most of your sleep will be in 2-3 hour stretches. Would you like some tips for sleepy parents to help get through this period?

**Allison:** *Sure!*

**CPA:** As babies get older, they will sleep for longer stretches of time.

[Go over "Sleep Patterns" section of the [Getting to Know Your Baby](#) (Baby Behavior Brochure)]

**CPA:** Any other questions that you might have about your baby's sleep?

**Allison:** *No, I don't think so.*

## Hunger Cues:

**CPA:** Another concern that new parents sometimes have is whether they will know when their baby needs to be fed.

**Allison:** *Yes, I've secretly thought about that. I worry that I won't know what my baby needs, and he will just cry and cry.*

**CPA:** That's a totally normal thing to think about. I have a video clip of a baby showing hunger cues. Let's watch it and then we can talk about them.

**Allison:** *Sure, that sounds good.*

[Show the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "Hunger Cues", discuss cues, and use the [Getting to Know Your Baby](#) (Baby Behavior Brochure) if needed]

**CPA:** *Responding to hunger cues early can prevent your baby from becoming too upset, and it will be much easier to feed your baby when he is calm.*

## Crying, No Hunger:

**CPA:** Now let's watch another video of a crying baby that is not hungry.

[Show the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "Crying Baby"]

**CPA:** What did you see this baby doing that was different from the hungry baby?

**Allison:** *Well, the baby was flinging her arms around and was sort of all stiff.*

**CPA:** Exactly. This baby is not showing any hunger cues. You may have noticed her jerky movements, tense muscles and stretched out arms and fingers. When a baby shows these cues, she's telling you she needs something to be different. We'll talk more about these cues after your baby has arrived.

**CPA:** So, what do you do when a baby is crying but isn't showing any hunger cues, like the baby in the video we just watched? This sometimes worries expectant moms.

[Go over **Calming a Crying Baby** section of [Getting to Know Your Baby](#) (Baby Behavior Brochure)]

**Allison:** *So sometimes babies are just fussy, but nothing is wrong.*

**CPA:** Yes, if you have checked everything, remember to hold your baby close and do the same thing over and over.

**CPA:** So, let's watch this mom trying to calm her baby.

[Play the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "**Overstimulated**"]

**CPA:** Was this mom able to calm her baby?

**Allison:** *NO! She was trying too many things all at once and the baby was getting more and more upset.*

**CPA:** Absolutely! Trying too many different things all at once can overwhelm your baby and make him more upset.

**CPA:** Now let's take a look at how a dad successfully calms his baby by repeating the same action over and over.

[Play the [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) video "**Calming a crying baby**"]

**CPA:** Remember to be patient. Calming a baby takes time. Sticking with the same action for several minutes can be the secret to success.

## Summary:

**CPA:** Having a baby is such an exciting time. The first six weeks can be hard, but as you get to know your baby, things will get easier. What is one thing that we talked about that you want to remember when your baby arrives?

**Allison:** *Well, I don't know about just one thing, but I'm for sure going to remember to not lay my baby down until he's in deep sleep. And I liked seeing that both parents can calm the baby.*

**CPA:** Great! I'm confident that you and your baby are going to figure out your own special language.

One last thing that I have to offer you today. There are many [MN WIC Baby Behavior Education](#) videos on YouTube that talk about sleep, hunger, crying, and cues. It's great to watch these with those who will be involved when your baby arrives.

**Allison:** *Thanks! I think my partner will want to watch them, so we both know what to expect. I know we are both kind of nervous about things, even though it is hard to admit it.*

**CPA:** That sounds great! And if you or your partner have any questions, please let us know.

## Reference- Complete Listing of Hyperlinks:

### Getting to Know Your Baby

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/nutrition/babybehaviors/english.pdf>)

### MN WIC Baby Behavior Education

(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnv1INVkmxmtYaMmowS5oBHnbgmps7Ai1>)

*Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program 85 E 7<sup>th</sup> Place, PO BOX 64882, ST PAUL MN 55164-0882; 651-201-3942, [health.wic@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wic@state.mn.us), [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us); To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3942*

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