



# What is My Baby Telling Me

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information – Neonatal Services

Some behaviours are easy to see, while others are subtle. Understanding your pēpi (baby) cues makes caring for them easier and helps their brain development.

## Awake cues

These are signs that your pēpi wants to be with you. This is a good time to talk to, hold, feed or play with your pēpi. They may still need swaddling.

### **Behaviour to watch for:**

- Looking at your face
- Turning eyes or head toward you
- Smooth body movements
- Smiling +/- holding hands
- Coing/talking sounds
- Eyes that are wide and bright



## Tired cues

These are signs your pēpi needs a rest from what they are doing. They may need to stop feeding, playing or being held. They may need soothing to help them settle.

### **Behaviour to watch for:**

- Falling asleep or heavy eyelids
- Yawning/sneezing/hiccupping/cough
- Turning head/eyes away
- Crying/fussiness/frowning
- Reaching out with stretched fingers
- Pulling away
- Dull looking eyes/staring into space



## Soothing ideas

- Swaddle to support them, wrap their hands to the middle under the chin.
- Comfort them with firm touch (avoid light stroking/patting). Place hand on chest (over both their hands), feet or head. A side lying position can be soothing.
- Skin-to-skin contact can be extremely beneficial as your baby can touch, smell and feel close to you.
- Use a reassuring, repetitive voice, eg. 'shushing' or humming.
- Reduce noise and light levels to help protect your pēpi sleep periods.
- Use gentle rocking combined with above.
- Offer of a pacifier for sucking to settle.

