

TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS ON CARING FOR SUBSTANCE AFFECTED INFANTS

INFORMATION TO PROVIDE PARENTS, RELATIVE CAREGIVERS AND/OR FOSTER PARENTS ON CARING FOR AN INFANT EXPOSED TO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

Caring for any new baby can be challenging, but babies who were exposed to drugs or alcohol in the womb may have some additional challenges. They may cry a lot, be hard to soothe or have trouble eating and sleeping. It is important that parents, relative caregivers and/or foster parents be provided information on how to care for and calm a drug exposed baby. The following tips are useful for caregivers:

BUNDLE OR SWADDLE YOUR BABY

- Wrap him/her snugly in a blanket to control movements and provide comfort

HAVE A QUIET AND STABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR BABY

- Use a calm, soothing voice
- Keep the lights turned down low
- Keep your baby from being too hot or too cold
- Avoid loud noises (turn off the television and loud music)

KEEP THE SAME ROUTINE FOR YOUR BABY

- Have set bed and nap times and feeding times
- Try soothing activities (one at a time) with the baby
- Gently rock or bounce your baby with a slow rhythmic movement-being careful to never shake him/her
- Massage your baby with a light gentle, soothing touch
- Bathe the baby in a warm bath and then lightly apply lotion to the baby's body
- Reduce activity levels before bedtime

BE PATIENT AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR SELF

- With time, you will discover what works best for your individual baby

IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, LIMIT THE NUMBER OF CAREGIVERS.

- Drug exposed infants do best with consistent care and familiar faces

Source: Nurse Family Partnership. *Caring For Babies Who Have Been Exposed to Drugs or Alcohol*. Retrieved from http://www.cffutures.org/files/publications/SEI%20Brochure_Final.pdf