

## Learning Jack's language

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I used to think that babies didn't do much for the first few weeks, that it wasn't until they smiled that the fun started. Not true for us! We had the usual confusing start to Jack's life trying to work out what he was trying to tell us. It was pretty ghastly when you have been through the checklist of: hungry, tired, dirty nappy, cuddle and nothing seemed to calm him.

After a couple of weeks we stopped asking others what they thought he might need and started taking more notice of Jack. We studied him real hard, starting from when he was blissfully happy after a full breast feed. We looked out for the subtle little changes that were there before he cried. We had been missing these. The loss of eye contact, the little twitches, the rubbing of the eyes, the clenched fists. And we took more notice of the situation he was in, what was happening, who was there, what time of day it was. Bit by bit we started to appreciate what Jack was telling us. We started to 'listen' to Jack. That was when everything changed for us.

We recognised that he was sometimes telling us he was hungry but we weren't believing him. We were reading him well in the mornings, but the afternoons were the challenge, especially when he'd had a feed not so long ago. We had noticed his hungry signs, but thought he couldn't need another feed just yet so we would try to distract him with talk and toys and jiggling about. And then he would get overtired as well as hungry and was harder to settle.

Now, it feels we have the same language most of the time and he is only four weeks old. We know when he is tired, when he is hungry, when he is enjoying our company. And we are careful to meet his needs before he gets upset. We know that he is happy to sleep in his basinette for morning sleeps but settles best in the sling in the afternoons; That he loves bath time with Daddy, but hates it if the water is too shallow.

We have come to trust that Jack does know what he needs and does tell us if only we would listen! And we are loving learning his language and reading his manual.