

BABY MAGIC or BABY KNOWS BEST

Most of us know people who are able to soothe and comfort any child. They smoothly switch the way they are holding the child and the way they move until they find the way that works. And they do it automatically! You too can develop the gift to do baby magic. It's all in how you move with a baby in your arms.

From birth, each baby intuitively knows which way she/he wants to move. When baby Mary was upset her parents tried patting her back and jiggling her up and down. Neither of those worked. Mom and dad quickly learned that sitting in a chair with Mary cradled in their arms and rocking back and forth calmed her down. Then they had Joshua and it was a different story. Sit and rock baby Joshua in a rocking chair and his fists would clench, his toes would curl up and he'd get more and more tense until he was screaming. But dad could sit on a big exercise ball with baby Joshua snuggled against his chest and bounce them both up and down and Joshua would calm right down, relax and drift off to sleep.

I was talking recently to Louise, a new grandmother. She was leaving the next day to visit her first grandchild and the new parents who were overwhelmed and not getting nearly enough sleep. We talked informally just long enough for her to get the idea of letting the baby teach her what movement was needed. Once Louise arrived at her daughter's she quickly figured out her granddaughter's first step and soon had her sleeping peacefully. Mom and dad appreciated the rest. They had been trying to jiggle the baby up and down or rock in a chair with her. This little one wanted to go side to side. The grandmother showed them the secret and got her first Grandmother's Gold Star. Next for this family is to have the baby teach them her full 3-Step Pattern.

There's a 3-Step Pattern? Yes. Each baby has his/her own 3-Step Pattern using: head to toe, belly to back or side to side movements. Using your baby's own 3-step process is a way to activate your baby's own neurological processes so s/he can more easily sail through the normal developmental stages. Figuring it out and using it, is a way to respect and value your baby's innate sense of what works and is needed for her/him. As your baby moves through the 3-Step Pattern, the message your baby gets loud and clear is 'I am safe. I am protected.' And your baby gets it at the core of his/her being, well below any conscious level.

The first step as Louise, the Gold Star Grandmother, so ably demonstrated will relax the little one and if this step is done long enough it puts him/her to sleep. The full 3-Step Pattern gets your baby ready to play, learn and deal with the world.

Darien was about to become a first time father. He and his wife knew about moving in the three directions and had each figured out their own 3-Step Pattern. Darien was in the birthing room when his son was born. When the nurse handed the precious bundle to him, he held his baby carefully flat against his chest and proceeded to 'check out' which way Alfred wanted to move. Darien paid attention to the tension levels in the minutes

old infant's body and, standing there in the birthing room, his new son soon taught dad his 3-Step Pattern. It's that easy and you can do it too.

Your baby will give you lots of clues and your baby is easily and smoothly able to teach you. Your task as the parent is to pay attention and figure out what your baby is saying. A tense baby will display some or all of these signs: curl up the toes, clench the fists, tense the muscles in the body, arch the back, have rigid arms and legs, breathe fast, cry. The more upset the baby is the more of these signs the baby will display. A relaxed, happy baby has open fingers and toes, hands and feet that are relaxed, arms and legs can be moved easily, muscles throughout the body are soft and sometimes the baby seems to get a lot heavier.

Once you figure out your baby's 3-Step Pattern life gets better for all. Get it wrong and you have a yelling, crying, tense, upset baby (and parent). Get it right and you have a calm, quiet, laughing, relaxed, curious baby (or even a sleeping one sshhhhh).

Patricia O'Reilly is president and founder of Metamorph Us Inc. Trainer, consultant, coach, her focus is to give people practical tools so they can succeed. Instructions complete with full colour pictures showing possible holding positions are available as a laminated chart from Metamorph Us. The handbook is currently in production. Check out www.metamorphus.com or pmoreilly@metamorphus.com.