The Fussiness Score

Overview: The Fussiness Score was developed by Keefe et al to quantify the level of fussiness shown by infants. Fussiness is the state of irritability shown by an infant without a readily identifiable cause.

Identifiable causes for fussiness include

1. hunger
2. a wet diaper
3. teething
4. pain from an injury.

The average number of hours per day that the baby fusses or cries without apparent cause is recorded.

Parameters:

1. amount of unexplained fussiness
2. intensity of the fussiness

Scoring for each parameter is along a continuous spectrum from 0 to 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Anchor Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extreme or maximal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

fussiness score = (points for unexplained fussiness) + (points for fussiness intensity)

Interpretation:

• minimum fussiness score: 0
• maximum fussiness score: 12

A child is considered irritable if one or more of the following is present (Keefe 1998):

1. amount of unexplained fussiness >= 3
2. intensity of fussiness >= 3
3. average hours of unexplained crying > 2.5 hours

References:

