

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.

Level	Anchor Points
none	0
intermediate	3
extreme or maximal	6

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:

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