

Language of Love

1.



Picture story 1 – Julie and Ethan
Julie and her son, Ethan are enjoying some time together in this series of shots. What kind of interaction do you think they are having and how is it progressing?

2.



3.

4.



The ability of babies to communicate goes way beyond simply crying and waiting for their parents to work out what is wrong.

Almost from the moment they enter the world, babies begin to develop sophisticated signals and reactions that parents can use to understand more about their child and what they need or want.

Parents who can read these signs will inevitably find it easier to recognise when and how to tend to their baby. And play will become more rewarding for both parties.

We've chosen a selection of pictures from *The Social Baby*, by Lynne Murray and Liz Andrews. Each of these scenarios will be familiar to you. Why don't you see how well you understand how baby is communicating in each of these? Grab a pen and note down what you think is happening and what the expressions are telling you. Then check your notes against the text in the side panel to see how accurate you were.

1.



Picture story 2 – Liz and Isabelle

Liz is obviously trying to comfort her crying baby, Isabelle in these pictures. But can you tell what Liz suspects is the reason for Isabelle's crying?

2.



3.



4.



Picture story 3 – Pierre and Emilie

Here, Pierre is communicating with his daughter, Emilie. Interaction like this is important for both the child and parent – what do you think Pierre has learned about his daughter here?

1.



2.



4.



3.



Picture story 1 – Julie and Ethan

Anticipation and release are common themes in play between adults and babies.

When playing a familiar game, there is a point where infants remember what is about to happen, and the thrill at this recognition is instantly recognisable in their faces and body language.

Pic 1: Julie is playing a game of 'round and round the garden' with 11-week-old Ethan. As the mother's fingers crawl up his tummy to the Ethan's chin, he laughs as he remembers the game.

Pic 4: Ethan watches his mother closely and his feeling of suspense and excitement build.

Pic 5: Julie reaches Ethan's neck and as his excitement peaks, he breaks into a smile.

Pic 6: Ethan wriggles with pleasure as the tickling begins.

Picture story 2 – Liz and Isabelle

Crying isn't a baby's only way to express the need for food. Parents can see if their child needs feeding without having to offer breast or bottle.

Pic 1: Liz holds week-old Isabelle and offers a finger to the side of her mouth

Pic 2: Isabelle reacts strongly, turning her head towards the finger

Pic 3: Isabelle opens her mouth wide to suck on her mother's finger.

Pic 4: She sucks strongly and deeply. Liz knows she needs feeding.

Picture story 3 – Pierre and Emilie

Sometimes babies just don't want to play, or feel overwhelmed by the stimulation. Insisting they engage with you can just provoke their irritation and ultimately their discomfort.

Pic 1: Dad Pierre is playing with 10-day-old Emilie by mirroring her facial expression and talking to her. She engages by smiling and using hand movements.

Pic 2: After a few minutes, Emilie begins to tire and a slight frown replaces her smile.

Pic 3: She disengages by looking away from Pierre and begins to squirm, frown and rub her face. Noticing her discomfort, Pierre stops play and waits to see what Emilie will do.

Pic 4: Because the stimulation is stopped, Emilie calms, regains interest and re-engages with Pierre. Play can now continue.

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