

Basic Human Needs **(Infant)**

How does an infant express his/her needs?

Acceptance—I am a small baby, but I need to be treated with dignity and respect. Treat me with the same respect and acknowledgement you would treat any adult. Think about me and my needs when you plan your day, your activities, and your life.

Accomplishment—I am discovering my body and the world around me. I turn to you with wondering eyes to find connection and approval, and to share what I am able to do. I find my hand! I find my feet! What discoveries!

Affection—I need to be held and cuddled as much as possible. I need to be close to you and your body, to smell you, to listen to your voice and heart, to feel your skin next to mine. I am learning to be loved by the way you hold me and touch me.

Appreciation and Belonging—I need to feel welcome and wanted. Appreciate me for who I am, even when it is difficult for you. This will be one of the most important gifts you can give me to help develop my self-esteem. Love me unconditionally and let me know you are always my ally.

Attention—Your attention is key for my survival. The quicker you respond to my crying and learn to fulfill my basic human needs, the more I learn to trust in you and in life. I learn the world is a safe, nurturing place. That will help develop my reptilian brain (which supports my survival functions) in a healthy way and better prepare me for learning.

Autonomy—Right now you decide almost everything about me. But if you pay really close attention, you will learn to read my cues when I want to do certain things, and how I want to do them. Try to tune into my rhythms, and give me empathy when we have to do something that I don't like.

Beauty—I like beautiful things to see, feel, and touch. I am happy with simple things, objects you can find at home that are made from natural materials are just as fascinating to me as "special" toys. And I find beauty in your eyes. Look into my eyes as much as you can, especially when you are bathing me, changing my diaper, nursing me and playing with me.

Creative Expression—Appreciate everything about me—even my poop is something I create! I am creating all the time. I create movements, sounds, giggles. Look at me and notice how much I create every single day.

Exercise—I love to be on my back on the floor. Create a safe and clean space for me with a few toys I can choose to play with. Actually, my own body is my favorite toy so far! Put me on my stomach just a few minutes at a time, so that I can strengthen the muscles in my back and neck, but pay close attention to when I feel tired, remember my head is still very heavy to hold on my own. I will get used to it and pretty soon you will be amazed when I lift my head and even try to scoot up on my knees. Then it won't be long—I will be crawling! Don't use pillows or any other prop to help me sit or walk. If I can't do it by myself it means that my body is not ready to do it yet. If you let me exercise on the floor and explore my body at my own pace, I will be able to learn how to sit, crawl, and walk by myself, I will have a healthy posture, and I will be less prone to accidents.

Fun and Play—My job is to play and discover all day long. Everything is play for me. When I do dangerous things, teach me safe limits, but remember my motivation is to learn about how the world functions around me, and how I function in the world.

Harmony—I want everybody to be happy and safe. I get scared when people yell; I worry because I don't understand adults' anger. Avoid stressful situations around me, and protect me from all kinds of violence. I have no way to protect myself. Talk to me in a reassuring voice when I feel scared or stressed. Create a safe, harmonious, calm environment in which I can grow.

Honesty—I'm very little but I need to know what's happening. Tell me about my day and what we are going to do. Tell me when you are leaving the room, and tell me when you are coming back. I may cry, as that's my honest way of expressing my sadness and fear of being separate from you. With your honesty and reassurance I will learn to know that you always come back. Tell me about your true feelings, but protect me from the big, difficult ones, as I'm not equipped yet to handle those. Tell me when you feel tired and need to rest, tell me when you feel sad because you can't understand what I need, tell me when you feel joy at having me in your life.

Learning—I'm always learning new things. Each day I learn new things about myself, about you, about our relationship and about the world. Pay close attention and try to see the world through my eyes; you will enjoy seeing the world afresh!

Order—In order for me to be flexible I need to have a routine, one that is developed by your attunement to my needs. The more predictable my day is, the more I can anticipate what's coming next, and the more I can adapt when things have to change.

Peace—I want peace and calm. I need to feel safe and free of all harm.

Respect—Respect my body, mind, and heart. Respect is something that I will learn with time. I need you to offer me full respect and model it for me, so that I can learn to respect you, myself, and others.

Rest—My body needs a lot of rest. Learn to listen to my cues. I know when I want to sleep! Remember my life is a revolution every day! I eat and I sleep. When I get to be a few months old, I will spend my time wanting to connect with you. And then I will need to take a nap. Maybe two or three naps!

Safety and Protection—I need safety at all times. Create a totally baby-proofed space where I can play. There will be things I'll want to do or touch that are dangerous for me. Learn how to gently redirect my behavior or give me an alternative toy. Remember to always give me empathy for what I cannot do.

Support—I need to know that I can count on the support of the important adults in my life. At all times. Always.

Trust—I want to know that I can trust in the world. I can do it when the adults in my life respect me. When I feel you understand and respond to my nonverbal communication, I learn to have trust in you and in myself.

Understanding—I want adults to understand me fully. Have developmentally appropriate expectations with me. Learn about me and know what I can and I can't do.

Basic Human Needs **(Preschool age child)**

How does a preschool child express his/her needs?

Accomplishment—I did it by myself! I am learning to tie my shoelaces, to pull up my pants, to brush my teeth! I can do it!

Affection—I need a hug. I like you to rub my back when I go to sleep.

Autonomy—I want to be able to choose and decide for myself. Today I am going to wear my red shirt, my orange pants, my blue sock and my green sock. I've decided to drink orange juice instead of milk. I'd like my blue plate.

Beauty—I like beautiful things to see, feel, and touch. I love to have my special blanket with me. I pick flowers for my mom and we put them in a vase so that we can look at them—they are beautiful.

Creative Expression—I like to color on paper with my markers. I turn and turn because I'm a car.

Dignity—I am a small child, but I like to be treated with respect. Respect my body, mind, and heart. I don't like it when people make fun of me or humiliate me. It hurts my dignity as a human being.

Exercise—I love to run and jump. I like to imitate Mama when she exercises.

Fun and Play—I love to play and explore all day. I like to invent my own games and to play with you.

Harmony—I want everybody to be happy and safe. I get scared when people yell; I worry because I don't understand adults' anger.

Honesty—I like to know what's happening. I like to know when it's time for Mommy or Daddy to go. I want them to tell me when they are going to leave so that I can understand. I may cry, as that's my honest way of expressing my sadness.

Learning New Abilities—I'm always learning new things. Each day I learn new things and then I like to share what I learned with my friends.

Love and Belonging—I am Mommy's/Daddy's special girl/boy.

Opportunity to Help Others Voluntarily—I love to help cook—I can cut the potatoes or the carrots. I want to slice them just like Papa does. I can use a plastic knife. I like it when Mama and Papa help me pick up my toys and then I help them do the dishes.

Order—I worry if I can't find my favorite toy. I like to know where it is so that I can go get it myself.

Peace—I want peace and calm. I am learning that when I have a problem I can meet my needs without hitting. It's very difficult to learn, but Mommy and Daddy are helping me.

Respect—Respect my body, mind, and heart, and I will respect you and others.

Rest—My body needs a lot of rest. When I am a preschooler, I need to sleep approximately eleven hours each night, and I need to take a nap during the day too. Rest keeps me strong and active.

Safety and Protection—I like to feel safe. If something ugly happens, I need you to keep me safe and tell me what happened. I need calm. I need help to understand that the world is a safe place.

Space—I like to have space to run. If there's no space for me to run inside, take me to a park. I love to run, swing, and climb.

Support—I need to know that I can count on the support of the important adults in my life. I will come to you to get a hug or sit on your lap.

Survival (food, water, air, shelter)—I want to eat foods that nurture my body and that strengthen my bones and heart. I like to drink water and juice in my favorite cup.

Touch—Rub my back! Hold me!

Trust—I want to know that I can trust in the world. I can do it when I have the respect of the adults in my life. When I feel their support, I trust them.

Understanding—I want adults to understand how old I am and what I can and can't do. If they have appropriate expectations about what I can do, then they will support me, especially with my feelings. If I am two years old, it is difficult to take me to the store because I think that all the candy is for me because it is put in places where I can reach it. It's very difficult for me to understand the concepts of money, buying, and selling!

Basic Human Needs **(Elementary age child)**

How does an elementary school child express his/her needs?

Accomplishment—I look to you to give me recognition as a human being. Your acknowledgement of my achievements gives me a sense of pride and triumph.

Appreciation—I want to feel valued and recognized for the individual I am, especially because I am your child. Share your feelings with me about what needs of yours are met when I am around you.

Belonging—Please listen to me. I want to be heard without judgments or solutions for my problems. Knowing that you care for me unconditionally even when I make a mistake makes me happy.

Beauty—I am still discovering. What is beauty? What does it mean to me? I see beauty in all things, from the bug in the ground to the galaxy in the sky. I want to continue discovering the beauty in others and myself without you imposing your personal evaluations on me.

Chances to Help Others, Willingly—I want to be part of the family. I might complain about helping to take care of the house but if you let me choose what I want to do, I will contribute.

Creative Expression—I enjoy making up stories, drawing pictures, and imagining all kinds of things. I like to listen to music, talk with my friends, and play games. I get pleasure in exploring my creativity. I change often. I am evolving as a person.

Exercise—I am usually active. I love to ride a skateboard, run, dance, ride a bicycle, hit a baseball, and play basketball. If I am a girl, encourage me to be physical and enjoy my body. I have a huge amount of energy. Exercise helps to keep me mentally and physically balanced.

Fun—I take pleasure in life. Life is stimulating. I like fun. I like my friends—I like to talk to them on the phone and have play dates with them.

Honesty—I am curious about many things. I may be shy to ask questions but you can find ways to share with me. I know I am growing up and I want to feel connected to and supported by you. Please answer my questions honestly. I can be honest with you and share my feelings if you are honest with me.

Kindness—Show me consideration with your total presence. Sometimes I need your attention to tune in to what I want to express without judgment. Just listen to me for a few minutes without distractions.

Learning—Everyday I am learning—at home, at school, with my friends. I'm learning academics at school, but I am also learning about life. I may have a hobby, something I enjoy doing a lot. I may get bored with learning, especially doing my homework. Support me with feeling good about myself as a learner and as a person who tries new things. I may be hard on myself and want to give up and not try any more. You may have to help me find different ways to learn—help me to feel smart!

Love—I am learning from you how to love. I may seem like I am distant and not wanting to hug or cuddle any more. Stay connected to me. Show me attention. Maybe our connection will be different now that I am getting older. Don't judge or criticize me. Stay close.

Order—My sense of order may be different from your sense of order. I may like to collect things and keep them on the floor. Let me have my personal space which I can trust will be safe and respected.

Peace—Sometimes I just want to be alone to think about my day or dream about the future. I need tranquility. I like quiet time to daydream.

Respect—Show me the same respect you need and want from me. I need you to respect me as another human being and help me feel confidence in sharing my feelings with you, knowing you will not judge me.

Rest—My body needs a lot of rest. It might be hard for me to know when I am tired. I just don't want the days to end. It may be hard to wake up in the morning. I would rather stay in bed and not rush to go to school.

Safety and Security—I want to feel safe and secure within our family environment, yet sometimes I want you to let me do things alone. I might get angry at you when you put limits around me: "I'm not a baby any more. My friend's Mom said she could go to the movie."

Space—I need my space. If I have younger siblings, I don't want to be expected to take care of them. I like to make my own decisions and feel free.

Support—I want more independence. I want to feel big, and then I may want to sit on your lap or at least close beside you. It might seem like a yo-yo—one minute I am strong and independent and then the next minute I am dependent on you. I am learning how to balance myself. Give to me lovingly and support my learning to be emotionally strong.

Survival—I am learning to feed my body well. There is so much junk food advertising in the world around me. It is hard for me not to want to eat the food I see my friends eating or that I see on the TV. I want it; I don't want to be the one who is different. But it is your job to protect me from hurting my body, my teeth, and not having the energy to learn. When I get older, I will appreciate this, but right now I may be mad if I can't eat what I want.

Touch—Sometimes I act like I don't want you to hold my hand, hug me, or kiss me because I'm older now, but I really do. Rubbing my back when I go to sleep still feels good to me. Cuddling on the couch as we talk feels good to me too. Find ways to touch me in a gentle way. Tell me that I only deserve to be touched by someone I trust. If at any time I feel uncomfortable with someone touching me, teach me that I can tell you or another trusted adult, and get help.

Trust—I need your trust. I need you to be connected to me. I need you to make time each day to talk with me and have fun with me. I will feel your confidence and trust in me.

Understanding—Take the time to learn about me. Remember what was important to you when you were my age. Talk to your friends that have children my age. Read books about me. I am growing and changing every day. It is your job to know me and understand me as the full person I am.

Basic Human Needs **(Adolescent)**

How does an adolescent express his/her needs?

Accomplishment—I look to you to give me recognition as a human being. Your acknowledgement of my achievements gives me a sense of pride and triumph.

Appreciation—I want to feel valued and recognized for the individual I am, especially because I am your child. Share your feelings with me about what needs of yours are met when I am around you.

Belonging—Please listen to me. I want to be heard without judgments or solutions for my problems. Knowing that you care for me unconditionally even when I make a mistake makes me feel accepted.

Beauty—I am still discovering. What is beauty? What does it mean to me? I see beauty in all things. I want to continue discovering the beauty in others and myself without you imposing your personal evaluations on me.

Chances to Help Others, Willingly—I notice your relationship with other people and how you help them. Because of your role modeling, it has become natural for me to assist others.

Creative Expression—I might walk around rapping, singing, dancing, or snapping my fingers because I need to express myself. You may not like my clothes. Life is fantastic and I get pleasure in exploring my creativity. I change often. I am evolving as a person.

Exercise—I am usually active. I love to ride a skateboard, run, dance, ride a bicycle, and play all kinds of sports and games. I have a huge amount of energy. Exercise helps to keep me mentally and physically balanced.

Fun—I take pleasure in life. Life is stimulating. Try to understand that my music gives me enjoyment, and I like communicating with my friends even if I just spoke with them a few minutes ago.

Honesty—Various topics such as sexuality, birth control, drug abuse, and my changing body are some of my concerns. I am curious about these things. Please answer my questions honestly. I can be honest with you and share my feelings if you are honest with me.

Kindness—Show me consideration with your total presence. Sometimes I need your attention to tune in to what I want to express without judgment. Just listen to me for a few

minutes without distractions.

Learning—My need to learn is probably not what you imagine that it should be. I need to learn to establish and maintain quality relationships which allow everyone's needs to be met. Share the nonviolent philosophy with me by being an example.

Love—I need encouragement. Show me attention. Even if I look physically grown up, and sometimes I act as if I do not want your hugs or acknowledgement, deep down inside I really do.

Order—My sense of order may be different from your sense of order. My bedroom, for example, is my personal space, and I need the freedom to keep it the way I like. Please be patient with me.

Peace—Sometimes I just want to be alone to think about my day or dream about the future. I need tranquility. I like relaxing in my room by myself.

Respect—Show me the same respect you need and want from me. I need you to respect me as another human being and help me feel confidence in sharing my feelings with you, knowing you will not judge me.

Rest—My body is really changing with sudden growth spurts. I might grow many inches in a few months. Because of this, I need a large amount of rest. I might even seem lazy, but I am not.

Safety and Security—I want to feel safe and secure within our family environment, yet sometimes I want to stay at home alone. It is good for my personal growth.

Space—Now that I am an adolescent, I need more independence. Giving me that space is important. Do not compare me to yourself or others. Let me experience and make some of my own choices.

Support—I want more independence, but I also need to know you are there to back me up when I might need your advice or when a problem arises. Knowing I have your support, I will gain more confidence in myself.

Touch—Sometimes I act like I don't want you to hold my hand, hug me, or kiss me because I'm older now, but deep down inside I feel a lot of happiness and security when you touch me.

Trust—I need your trust. Sometimes I may just want to be with my friends to do "teen stuff." Knowing that you trust me, I can check in with you about my feelings and have a connected relationship.

Understanding—My clothing and hair may be different from what you want for me. Some words or phrases I use may seem strange to you, but they are important to me at this time of my life. Understand me by trying to remember the difficulties you experienced when you were an adolescent.