

THE MILKY WAY SLEEP COMPANY



RESTFUL NIGHTS,
HAPPY THRIVING DAYS

A NEWBORN SLEEP GUIDE

Helping Families Sleep So They Can Thrive

A Comprehensive Guide to Sleep
Solutions for Babies and Toddlers



Welcome

WELCOME TO YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS BETTER SLEEP! THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IN ACHIEVING RESTFUL NIGHTS AND PEACEFUL DAYS.

I understand that sleep is crucial to overall well-being, and my goal is to provide you with the tools and knowledge to improve sleep patterns for you and your little ones.

Within these pages, you'll find detailed information on various aspects of sleep, from understanding sleep cycles to creating the perfect sleep environment. I've included practical tips and checklists tailored along with planners and reflections to track your progress. I hope this guide empowers you to make informed decisions and create a healthy sleep routine.

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*The Complete
Guide To Sleep*

The role of a sleep consultant



A sleep consultant is a professional whose specialty is helping families with their children's sleep by providing safe sleep practices, techniques, and advice.

It is a person whose primary goal is to serve people well by being judgment-free, quick to listen and slow to speak.

It is important to remember that the real heroes are the moms and dads who took the complex steps and became vulnerable by asking for help.

But I also want you to rest assured that I am helping you with real training and knowledge as a certified baby and toddler sleep consultant. I received my certification from the Cradle Coach Academy, which the Association of Professional Sleep Consultants recognizes. I had the privilege to work with some of the best in the industry, to practice with more than seven volunteer families, and I am required to stay up to date with the sleep method, science and research.

What is sleep training and how to start

When teaching a baby sleep training, we are teaching them to fall asleep independently, stay asleep, and go back to sleep on their own. Sleep training does not equal crying it out. There are many gentle methods, and we will always ensure that the child is safe, feels connected, and is supported.

One aspect of sleep training that will be applied to all babies and children equally, though, is safety! A crib needs to be free of blankets, loveys, or bumpers and only contain a firm mattress with a fitted sheet. For the rest of the room, whether it is a baby or toddler room, the furniture should be anchored, and no wires should be reachable. The best thing to do is to consider the child's room like a big crib.

Why does sleep matter?

Sleep is a fundamental component of a child's health and development. It affects everything from growth and cognitive function to mood and immune system strength. Restful sleep is crucial for brain development, emotional regulation, and physical growth for babies and toddlers. As a parent, understanding the nuances of sleep can empower you to foster a nurturing environment that supports your child's overall well-being.

Sleep is not just about rest; it's about rejuvenation and growth. A well-rested child is more alert, happier, and better able to learn and explore the world around them. By prioritizing sleep, you are laying the foundation for your child's future health and success.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to be a comprehensive resource for parents and caregivers. Each chapter focuses on different aspects of sleep and provides practical advice and strategies.

Throughout the guide, you will find checklists and practical tips to help you implement these strategies effectively. You can use this guide as a reference, and feel free to revisit sections.

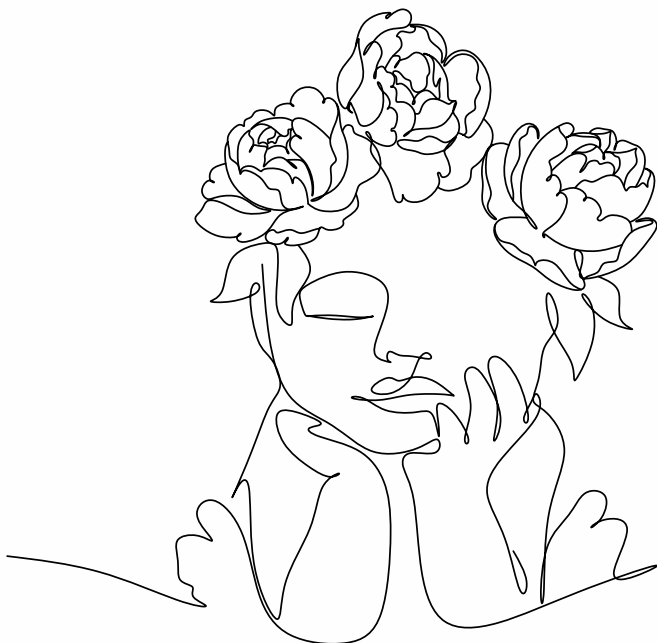
Brain Development and Sleep

Sleep Cycles and Stages

Sleep plays a pivotal role in brain development, particularly in the early years. During sleep, the brain processes information, forms new neural connections, and strengthens existing ones. This is particularly important for language acquisition, memory, and problem-solving skills.

In infants, a significant portion of sleep is spent in REM, which supports the rapid brain growth and learning that occurs during this period.

By ensuring your child gets adequate sleep, you are supporting their ability to learn, adapt, and thrive in their environment. This guide will equip you with the tools to create the optimal conditions for your child's sleep, promoting their overall growth and development.



Sleep is composed of different cycles and stages, each playing a vital role in a child's development. Understanding these can help you better support your child's sleep needs.

1. REM (Rapid Eye Movement) Sleep:

This stage is crucial for brain development and cognitive processing. It's often associated with dreaming and is essential for memory consolidation.

2. NREM (Non-Rapid Eye Movement) Sleep:

This includes the deeper stages of sleep, where restorative processes occur. It's vital for physical growth and repair.

During a typical night, a child will cycle through these stages multiple times. Recognizing these cycles can help understand why disruptions might occur.

Newborn are simply light sleepers. A typical adult sleep cycle includes: light sleep, deep sleep, REM and then light sleep again and lasts about 90/100 min

The calm deep sleep we know for as adults is only 20min for newborns. They start with active sleep and they don't lose muscle tone like us in REM so they actually move around. We tend to think they are waking when in reality they are in the equivalent of REM. needs being met.

Circadian Rythm and stages of sleep

When babies are born,

their circadian rhythm is not synchronized with a 24-hour clock. This is why some newborn can get their night and days confused. To help them figure it out, it is important to work on a few habits: Provide ample sunlight and outside time as soon as possible.

Exposure to natural light during the day helps increase melatonin production in the evening, aiding in easier sleep onset (Czeisler, 2013)

Maximize strong connection and bounding time during the day and keep the nights in slumber state as much as possible with minimal interactions, eye contact and lighting.

The Stages of sleep are different for newborns.

First of all, we need to understand that newborns receive melatonin through the placenta in utero, but once out of the womb, they need to develop their own circadian rhythm, which can take time and is more complicated due to their feeding needs. Newborn sleep cycles last about 40 minutes.

The first ten, they fall asleep.

10-20 min: they are in a deeper sleep.

20-30 min: heavy sleep: recognizable by lump body and undisturbed by even the loudest sounds.

30-40min: coming out of heavy sleep

40-50min: light sleep, easy to wake.

Once they get old enough, they are ready to learn to self-soothe and learn to transition into the next sleep cycle.

Babies under 12 weeks are not prepared to learn that skill as they can still struggle with day and night confusion up to that age. Cortisol regulation comes a little later, between 3 and 5 months.

"Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." — Thomas Dekker

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Healthy Sleep foundations allow us to start implementing a routine. It can be introduced as early as possible, even if the child is nursing/feeding on demand. Those foundations ensure that every aspect necessary for safe and healthy sleep is being considered and will provide predictability and safety. Some newborns react so well to sleep foundations that they end up never needing proper sleep training.

Nutrition

Newborns (and beyond) need proper nutrition and enough calories, so we don't want to sleep train before 12lb.

Nutrition can include breastfeeding and formula feeding. We just need to make sure that they are following the growth curve and have the right amount of wet and dirty diapers.

Signs of hunger are:

- Moving head side to side
- Opening mouth
- Sticking out tongue
- Puckering lips
- Tight fist
- Putting hands/fingers in mouth

Is the baby eating enough?

In the first couple of weeks, newborns tend to feed every 2 to 3 hours, averaging about 10 to 12 feeds a day. As they grow, their stomach size increases, and they are able to take larger feeds and go longer stretches without feeding.

At 2 months, we expect them to take about 5-6oz per feed about six times daily. By 3-5 months, they can take about 6-7 oz 5-6x a day.

A good rule of thumb is the following: Children under 6 months old require an average of 2-2.5 oz/lb in a 24-hour period. So, a 10-lb baby needs 20-25 oz per day, which is 3-4 oz 6 to 8 times a day.

There is no one-size-fits-all, but a good range of what to expect can reassure any new or experienced parent.

- Nuzzling against mother's breast
- Stroking or touching his cheek
- Crying (this signs should rarely come up as it means it is already pretty late).

Signs baby is full:

- Closing lips when bottle or nipple gets close
- Turning away
- Decrease or stop sucking
- Relaxed hands
- Shows interest in surroundings rather than eating.

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Sleep Environment

The sleep environment is essential to successful sleep, and you need to set the stage.

Where babies should sleep can spark many debates, and I can only recommend what is safe and AAP-approved. The rest is up to your comfort level, lifestyle, opinion, etc.

The AAP suggests room-sharing for the first 6 months of life so that the baby is nearby to help prevent the risk of SIDS. The AAP does not recommend bed-sharing, as it increases the risk of SIDS. Whether the baby is in his crib or a bed-side bassinet, we must provide a safe, cool, and comfortable environment.

An adequate sleep environment is as follows:

Fresh, cool, flowing air between 68 and 72 degrees. The room should be as dark as possible for all sleep: naps and nights. The child should be dressed appropriately to the room's temperature with long cotton pyjamas, swaddled or sleep sacks, depending on their age and whether they can roll.

They must be out of the swaddle as soon as they learn to roll. To cover outside noises and remind the baby of the womb, we recommend a white noise machine that is as loud as a shower.

The crib should be free of anything: blanket, lovey, and bumpers. According to the AAP, a lovey can be introduced in 12 months. By 6 months, or when the child can sit, the crib mattress should be at the lowest level, and there should be nothing near the crib. Babies should be out of the bed-side bassinet at the same age as they are old enough to learn to sit independently, making it unsafe.

Finally, the baby should always be put down on their back.

Room sharing awareness: If you or your spouse is a smoker and sleeps in the same room, this is highly discouraged due to the increasing risk of SIDS.

I know. Sometimes, babies will refuse to sleep unless held, and it's 2 a.m., and you are exhausted. It is still highly advised not to, and you should only have a baby in bed to feed or comfort. You should always put babies on their backs for ALL periods of sleep.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Find out how many layers your baby needs to wear during the night

>26°C



24-25



22-23



18-21



The ideal temperature for your baby's room is between 16°C and 20°C



15-17

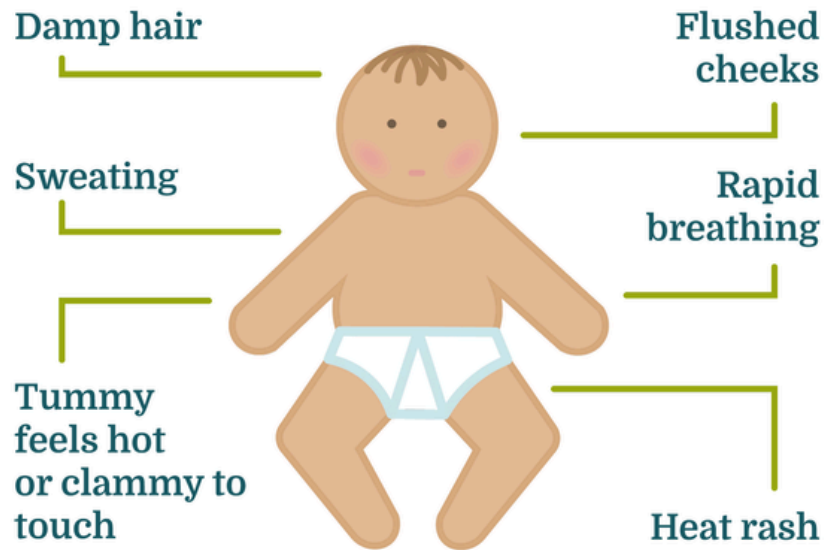


<15°C



Healthy Sleep Foundations

Signs that your baby is too hot



Do

- ✓ Use the touch test - check for sweating by placing two fingers on your baby's tummy, back or neck.
- ✓ If your baby feels hot to the touch, take a layer off and check again in ten minutes.
- ✓ Open windows and doors to help air circulate.
- ✓ Keep your baby's room cool by closing blinds or curtains during the day.

Don't

- ✗ Don't check your baby's feet or hands - these are often cooler than the rest of your baby's body.
- ✗ Don't put your baby to bed with a hot water bottle, or electric blanket.
- ✗ Don't dress your sleeping baby in a hat or gloves, even in cold weather.

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Bedtime Routine:

Introducing bedtime as early as possible will help both the child and the parents move on to sleep time. It helps settle the body down and to bring in melatonin. Some kids will fuss as they know it is starting, but it is essential to stick to it (also, the fussing will last up to a couple of days). The routine should be started about 45 minutes to 1 hour before bedtime, and it can look as follows: give a nice lukewarm bath/sponge bath followed by massage with cream or oil, then dress the baby for bed. Start feeding (15-20min before bedtime time) with the lights on. We do not want them to fall asleep to the breast/bottle. Keeping them awake is the most crucial part. If needed, parents tickle them, change their diapers, and work on a good burp. Add a relaxing activity: rocking, reading a story, singing a lullaby. Once the feed is done, please turn on the sound machine and place them in their crib, on their back, drowsy or still awake. Turn the lights off and close the door.

Timing is Key: Aim for a consistent bedtime each night. This helps regulate your child's internal clock, promoting better sleep quality.

Consistency is Crucial: Try to maintain the same routine, even on weekends. This consistency reinforces the sleep-wake cycle.

Research indicates that children with regular bedtime routines sleep better, with reduced night wakings and longer sleep durations (Mindell et al., 2015).

Morning Routine:

It is vital to set the tone of the day. Start by setting the wake-up time and keeping it the same. Consistency is key here.

Open the blinds for natural light, change the diapers, and get them dressed. Then we can move on to feeding and the rest of the day by following the feed schedule, wake windows, and nap schedule. Again, the consistency pattern is very important in helping the child feel reassured about what to expect next.

Emotional Needs Are Met:

It is important to understand the impact we have on our children's confidence, trust, and emotional security. Parents can foster those emotional needs by spending time in the room, not just for bedtime, and by being intentional with their children: Put the phone down and genuinely laugh, play, sing, and dance with them.

For working moms and dads, be intentional in the evening or at breakfast. Children develop habits based on what they are given. We Need to show love and quality time to build emotionally strong, healthy children.

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Terms to know:

Cluster Feeding:

They are fed close together during the day. They tend to happen during a growth spurt for about 48 hours, or they can be something we tend to see before bedtime.

Cluster feeding is regular, and you should be supported during this short but intense 1 to 2 days of overfeeding many more times than usual.

Typically, we see growth spurts at 7-10 days old, 2-3 weeks, 4-6 weeks, 3 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 9 months.

Dream feed:

Feed while the baby is still partially asleep, and put it back down. If the child wakes up 2/3 hours later, dream feeding does not help. I do not recommend dream feeding before 3 months old. When doing a dream feed, ensure proper feeding positioning, and never do it with the baby in a flat position.

Solids:

Pureed and baby-led weaning are both types of solid introductions. It starts at 6 months but can be as early as 4 months. It is up to the pediatricians. Even earlier than 6 months could impact the baby's gassiness and make it more irritable for sleep.

Colic:

Colitis is a common issue for the first 4 months: frequent, prolonged, intense crying and fussiness in healthy infants. No apparent reason and no amount of consoling seems to bring relief.

Colic tends to peak at 6 weeks and decreases by 3/4 months.

Colic follows the 3-3-3 rules: 3 or more hours a day, three or more days a week for three or more weeks. Colic tends to happen at about the same time every day for no apparent reason but with similar signs: baby pulls up their legs, move more, close their eyes or open very wide, and even hold their breath. We see increased bowel activity, gas, and spit-up. Eating and sleeping are disturbed.

Colic is often associated with reflux. It has yet to be defined where colic stems from.

Reflux can cause colic. It occurs when the baby has just finished feeding, and the food comes back into the food pipe.

Signs of reflux: projectile vomiting, the baby isn't gaining weight, consistently spits up, spits up green or yellow, Refuses food, Blood in stools, Irritable after eating.

Healthy Sleep Foundations

Terms to know:

Silent Reflux:

The symptoms include crying, difficulty settling, inability to be set down (needing constant rocking, etc.)

Silent reflux makes sleeping very challenging because babies are uncomfortable on their backs. These babies are called very clingy, with high needs and demands. They pull their knees up and seem to have feeding issues. Please discuss it with your pediatrician and ask if the bed can be slightly elevated on one side; following safe practices is essential.

Silent reflux babies need to be upright for 15 to 30 minutes after feeding while working to get a good burp out of them.

It makes them want to nurse constantly, but it will cause irritability.

Please talk to your pediatrician.

Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a sleep disorder due to the narrowing or blockage of the upper airway. In infants, it is primarily due to enlarged tonsils or adenoids.

Common signs at night include snoring, pause in breathing, and night sweating. During the day, we see exhausted babies who are restless and do not seem rested from the night. Please take a video and talk to your pediatrician.

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety can start as early as 4 months old and peaks between 8 and 12 months of age. We can also see peaks of separation anxiety during the toddler, preschool and kindergarten phases; it is essential to handle it properly. We can't act as if it is not a thing or, on the contrary, never leave their sides. All separation anxiety is trying to show is that children want reassurance from their care provider: "Safety is the predictability of the relationship."

Three tips that can be used whatever the age:

- seek especially inside the crib.

- give a security object. To help understand object permanence.

- Start bedtime 15min earlier. Extend bedtime routine: longer time in the bath, extra story

The night is the most extended period when our children are separated from us, so pushing for connection during the day is paramount.

Why Nap?

Naps are crucial for young children, offering numerous benefits such as improved mood, enhanced learning, and better nighttime sleep. For newborn, naps can be hit or miss and that is normal. Naps tend to be short until about 6 months old. We can still create good habits with more scheduled feedings, a balanced between stimulation and transitioning to sleep time and finally routines for both morning and bedtime. WE are not talking about strict and rigid schedule but of the importance of predictability and routine.

Cognitive Development: Naps contribute to memory consolidation and overall brain development.

Emotional Regulation: Regular naps help prevent overtiredness, reducing irritability and tantrums.

Research shows that adequate daytime sleep is associated with improved attention and emotional regulation in children (Lam et al., 2011).

Newborns (0-3 months): Frequent naps throughout the day, typically lasting 30 minutes to 2 hours.

If your newborn takes super-short naps, there could be a few reasons.

First, is your newborn getting overstimulated or staying up for too long between naps? At this age, they shouldn't be watching devices of any kind as they're too busy and can overwhelm your child.



Make sure that there is a transition from playing and interacting to sleep time, and also watch for cues on when it's time to transition your baby to nap/bedtime: if they're calm and happy and they've been up for a while, it's time. They already started rubbing their eyes, whining, crying and acting fussy. They're overtired, and it's time to get them down quickly. Another culprit can be your diet you're breastfeeding. If you usually have caffeine later in the day, consider having no caffeine after 3-4 p.m. Sugar and certain foods can cause issues, so be mindful of your diet and the time of day you're consuming things.

A few other things to look at: are you being consistent with their schedule, and are you keeping a routine and environment conducive to sleep?

To know how long your baby should be up between naps, here is a little cheat sheet and a bit extra so you know what to expect as they age.

0 to 8 weeks

Total sleep need: 16-20hours

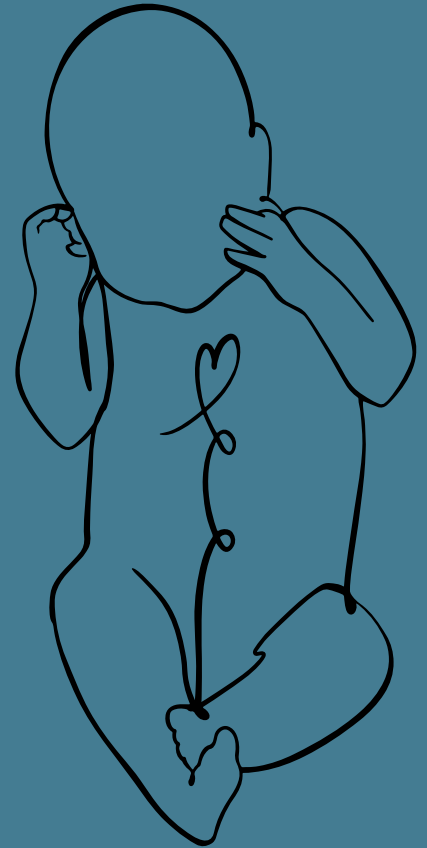
Max Awake Time: 45 to 60min

Average Night Sleep: 11 Hours

Average time between feeds: on demand

Naps per day: 4+

Max length of each naps: 3hours



8 to 12 weeks

Total sleep need: 15.5-18 hours

Max Awake Time: 60 -90 mins

Average Night Sleep: 11 Hours

Average time between feeds: 2.5-4 hours

Naps per day: 4

Max length of each naps: 3hours

12 to 16 weeks

Total sleep need: 15.5 hours

Max Awake Time: 90-120 min

Average Night Sleep: 11 Hours

Average time between feeds: 3.5-4 hours

Naps per day: 3-4

Max length of each naps: 2.5 hours



16 to 20 weeks

Total sleep need: 15 hours

Max Awake Time: 2 hours

Average Night Sleep: 11 Hours

Average time between feeds: 3.5-4 hours

Naps per day: 3

Max length of each naps: 2 hours

4 to 6 months

Total day sleep: 3-4 hours

Awake time: 1.5-2.5 hours

Naps per day: 3-4

7 to 13 months

Total day sleep: 2-3 hours

Awake time: 2.5-3.5 hours

Naps per day: 2

18 to 24 months

Total day sleep: 2-3 hours

Awake time: 4-5 hours

Naps per day: 1

13 to 18 months

Total day sleep: 2-3 hours

Awake time: 3-4 hours

Naps per day: 1

24 to 36 months

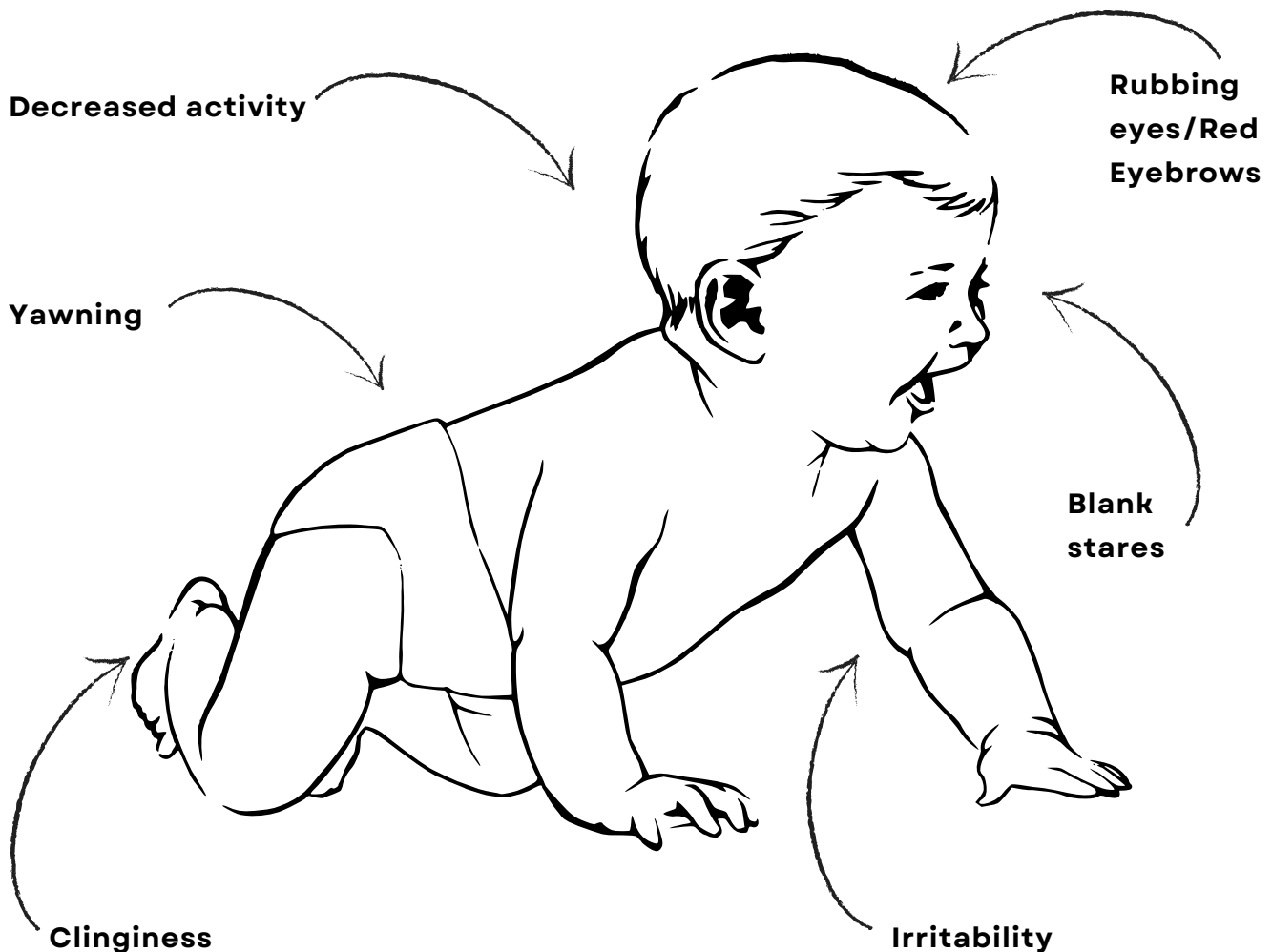
Total day sleep: 1-2 hours

Awake time: 5-6 hours

Naps per day: 1

Creating a nap schedule

Recognizing the signs that a child is ready for a nap is crucial to understand and respond to the rest they need. Look for the following indicators:



Creating a conducive napping environment is essential for maximizing the quality of sleep. Here are some ideal conditions to consider:

- Minimize noise distractions; consider using white noise machines
- Use blackout curtains or shades to create darkness, signaling to the body that it's time to sleep.
- Maintain a cool and comfortable room temperature, typically between 68-72°F (20-22°C).
- Use a firm mattress and a fitted sheet.
- Keep the room calm and uncluttered; soft colors and minimal distractions can help.: no mobiles or crib toys.
- Establish a consistent napping schedule to reinforce the body's internal clock.

Dos and Don'ts of Napping

Do Keep a Routine: Try to nap simultaneously daily to establish consistency.

Do Create a Wind-Down Routine: Incorporate calming activities before napping, such as reading a book or listening to soft music.

Please be sure to look for sleepy cues.: Pay attention to your child's sleep cues and adjust the schedule accordingly.

Do offer alternatives: Baby carrier or stroller naps can be an efficient way for your baby to sleep for a reasonable amount of time and for you to replenish your cup with fresh air and maybe even sunshine.

Don't Force Sleep: If you or your child can't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up and try again later.

Don't Use Screens Before Napping: Limit screen time before naps, as blue light can disrupt natural sleep signals.

Don't Skip Naps: Recognize the importance of naps, especially for newborns and young children.

Don't leave the baby in its car seat unattended for a nap. Follow proper guidelines for baby carriers.

Don't stress over day sleep: Even if the time of day isn't consistent, start to have a consistent routine of what happens before the baby goes to bed will help.

My Child Nap Routine Is...

Newborn Sleep Essentials

Understanding the unique sleep patterns of newborns is crucial for new parents navigating the early weeks and months. Newborns typically sleep between 14 to 17 hours a day, with some babies sleeping as little as 12 hours a day and others up to 19 hours. While that is many hours, it will not be uninterrupted rest. You will see spurts of 1 to 3 hours with sometimes short 30-minute naps. This fragmented sleep is mainly due to their small stomachs requiring frequent feedings. Also, half of their sleep is REM sleep during the first few months. REM sleep for newborns is a lighter sleep pattern, which is essential for brain development. Parents should be aware that if there are frequent wakings, this stage will occur throughout the night. Remember, too, that REM in newborns is very active, and you may think the baby is awake when, in reality, they are still sound asleep.

Safety is paramount when it comes to newborn sleep practices. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing babies on their backs to sleep, which significantly reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). A firm mattress with a fitted sheet is ideal, and parents should avoid soft bedding, pillows, or toys in the crib to create a safe sleeping environment. Also, maintaining a comfortable room temperature can help ensure babies do not overheat, reducing SIDS risk.

Other safety aspects to consider when it comes to newborn sleep:

Stroller Sleep:

- Be sure they are in the correct seat and position for their age/ weight. Not every stroller is meant to hold young babies without proper attachments. Other safety information: Baby must be supervised and clipped in appropriately with no blankets in the car seat (overheating risks). Do not hang heavy bags on handlebars so the stroller cannot tip over. Always use the brake when stopped and limit stroller naps to under 2 hours.
- If arriving back home, take the baby out and move them to a flat surface or hold them for the remainder of their nap vs. keeping them in the stroller unattended.

Newborn Sleep Essentials

Baby wearing:

Baby carriers, or slings, allow you to carry your newborn or baby while keeping your hands free. And with the amount of sleep a newborn does in a day, it can be greatly appreciated.

Before you use your sling or carrier:

- check for wear and tear
- look for ripped seams, torn straps and damaged parts.
- Be very careful putting your baby into or pulling them out of a carrier or sling. Ask for help if you need it.
- Don't use a carrier or sling when running, cycling, preparing meals, or eating or drinking hot food or beverages.
- Use a sling or carrier designed for your baby's age and weight.

Babies, especially those under 4 months or born prematurely or with a medical condition, may have poor neck control and are at higher risk of suffocation. Could you talk to your doctor first before using a sling or carrier?

To ensure their airway is clear at all times and their back and neck are supported, follow the **CHECK** system:

Chin off your chest - **H**ave a baby in view at all times - **E**venly support their back (make sure the legs make an M shape and their back is rounded, making a C) - **C**lose enough to Kiss - **K**eep the carrier tight.

Check the products I recommend at the end of the guide.

Car seats:

Babies can sleep in a car seat for short periods, but car seats are not designed for extended or overnight sleep. Here are some reasons why:

Sleeping position: A baby's sleeping position in a car seat may not be ideal for extended periods. Sleeping in a curved position can flex a baby's neck forward, blocking their airway and increasing the risk of SIDS.

Temperature: Temperatures in a parked car can rise quickly, so you should never leave your baby asleep in one.

Spine strain: Prolonged periods in a semi-upright position can strain a baby's developing spine.

Airflow: Prolonged periods in a semi-upright position can restrict airflow to a baby's lungs.

If your baby falls asleep in a car seat, you can move them to a safe sleep space when you arrive at your destination.

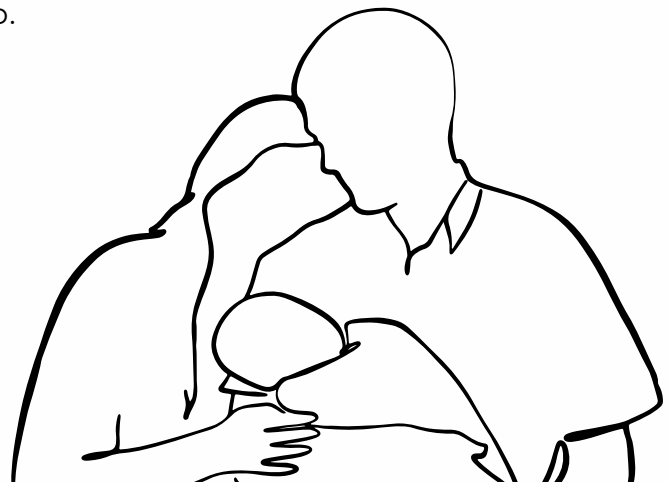
Newborn Sleep Essentials

"Just as the moon guides the tides, a gentle routine guides a newborn's sleep, nurturing growth and development."

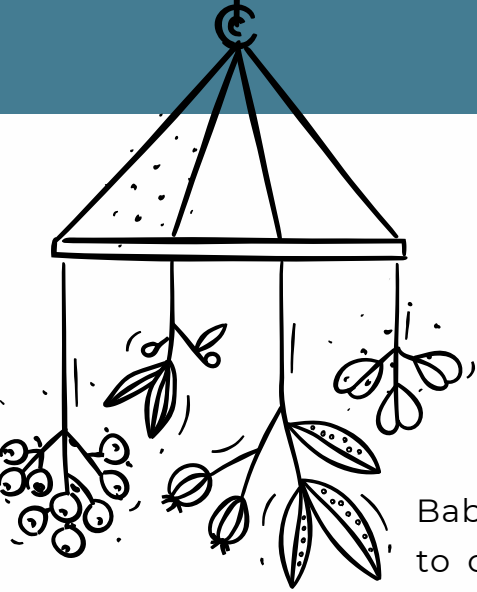
Feeding and sleep often go hand in hand in the newborn stage. Many parents find feeding their baby before sleep helps establish a comforting routine. However, finding a balance is essential, as relying solely on feeding to soothe a baby to sleep can create dependencies that may be challenging to manage later. Encouraging a gentle transition from feeding to sleep can help babies learn to self-soothe without relying on feeding as their only comfort.

Parents can create a supportive environment that fosters healthy sleep habits from the beginning by understanding newborn sleep patterns, practicing safe sleep techniques, and finding a balance with feeding. This foundational knowledge will help parents navigate the early days of parenthood and set the stage for better sleep as their child grows.

While many try to get their newborns on a sleep schedule as quickly as possible, you may readily find just getting them to sleep whenever works best while you figure out how to be parents and adjust to life with a baby, and with all the visits from friends and family. Additionally, don't feel like you have to tiptoe around and create a super-quiet environment for your newborn. They have just spent 9 months in the womb, sleeping through continual ambience and the noises of everyday life- traffic, vacuum, hair dryers, fans, etc. Having noise in the background will help them to stay asleep.



Babies and White Noise



Babies spend 9 months in the womb listening to constant noise: blood flow, amniotic fluid, your and other's voices, your heartbeat, etc.

To take that ambient noise away would be alarming for your very new baby, who is still adjusting to the outer world. That's why keeping noise going and living life around them is essential. Using a white noise sound machine at all sleep times offers comfort. I recommend keeping the white noise during their naps and nights for the first 2 years of life. My personal favourite is the sound of a running fan. So you could have a fan running, but I highly advise relying on technology and getting a pluggable, rechargeable, portable sound machine. We want to make sure the white noise stays on during the entire duration of the naps and the whole night.

I personally love the Hatch as you will be able to use it as a wake clock when the baby becomes a toddler, but here are some other options:

<https://www.babylist.com/hello-baby/best-sound-machines>



The role of Pacifiers

Pacifiers, or dummies, are often used to soothe infants and toddlers. Understanding their benefits and potential drawbacks can help parents make informed decisions about their use.

If you're exclusively breastfeeding, it's encouraged to wait on offering a pacifier until your milk supply is well-established and you're on a consistent feeding routine with your newborn, usually between 4-6 weeks old, and recommended 6-8 weeks depending on when your baby's 6-week growth spurt is over.

Benefits

Soothing Effect: Pacifiers can provide comfort and help calm fussy babies by satisfying their natural sucking reflex.

Sleep Induction: They can aid in helping babies fall asleep and stay asleep longer by promoting relaxation.

SIDS Reduction: Studies have shown that using a pacifier during sleep may reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) (Mitchell et al., 2006).

Drawbacks

Dental Issues: Prolonged use, especially beyond age 2-3, can lead to dental problems such as misalignment of teeth. For newborn we see an increased risk of oral thrush (yeast), which can be passed along to mom.

Dependency: Some children may become reliant on the pacifier for comfort, making it challenging to wean off.

Ear Infections: There is a potential link between pacifier use and an increased risk of middle ear infections.

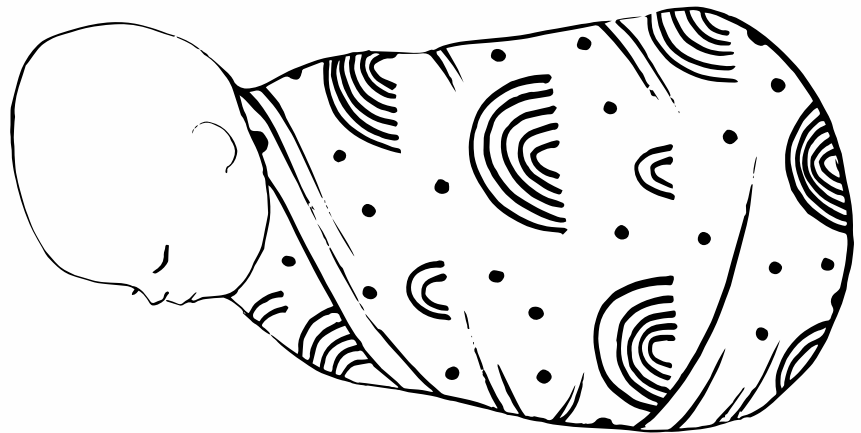
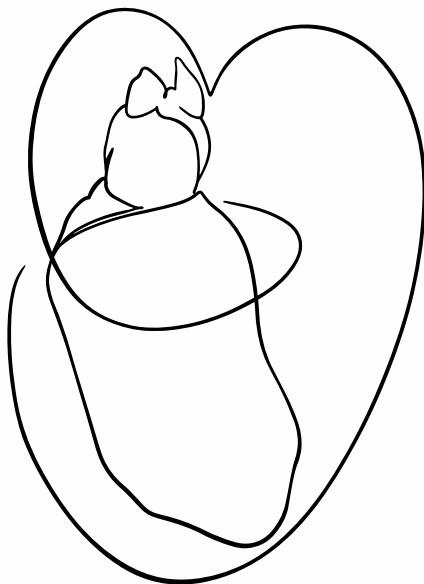
Safe Use and Weaning Off

For safe use of pacifiers, it's important to select a one-piece pacifier made of durable materials appropriate for your child's age. Regularly inspect the pacifier for wear and tear, replacing it as needed to prevent choking hazards. Maintaining hygiene by washing pacifiers frequently and avoiding dipping them in sweet substances is crucial. When it comes to weaning off, begin when your child shows readiness, typically between 6 months and 1 year. Gradually reduce pacifier use, limiting it to bedtime and nap times, and introduce alternatives like a favorite stuffed animal or blanket. Use positive reinforcement by praising and rewarding your child for successfully going without the pacifier.

The Art of Swaddling

Many newborns love to be swaddled; it brings their body into a position very similar to that of being in the womb, offers comfort, and suggests it's sleep time. Swaddling isn't for every newborn, but it's worth a shot if you're trying to get them to sleep. There truly is an art to it, but if you follow these steps and practice, swaddling could be a tremendous help for you and your baby :

- wrap baby's arms snugly at their sides but keep hips and legs loose
- use a large, square blanket
- don't cover up the baby's head
- don't allow unravelling/losing sides (tuck in the corner of the blanket!)
- don't swaddle all day long, only when fussing or trying to get baby to sleep



Dropping the swaddle:

As soon as the baby starts rolling on their tummy, it is essential to transition out of the swaddle. I recommend moving onto a sleep sack. Some excellent brands like Love to Dream or BBluv offer transition swaddle Sack. But my personal favourite that worked with both of my boys is the Halo Sleep Sack Swaddle:

How to drop the swaddle:

One arm out for 3 nights

Both arms are out for the next 3 nights.

Move to sleep sack or footed pyjamas on night 7 with NO blankets!

Why do we need to transition out?

Swaddles help keep the Moro reflex in check, but once babies can roll, it becomes unsafe as babies cannot use their arms to get themselves into a safe sleeping position.

Settling Techniques for Peaceful Sleep

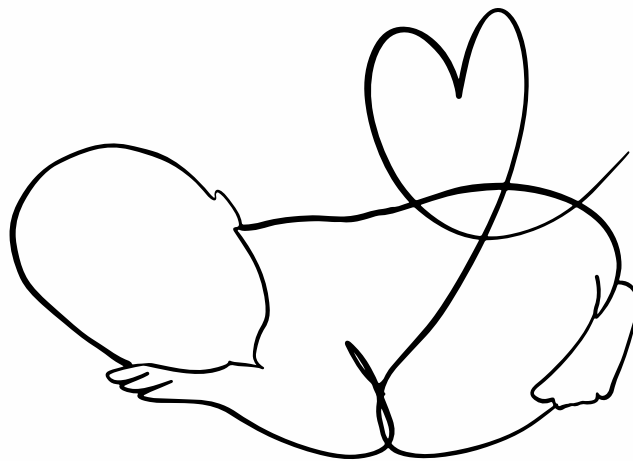
Creating a peaceful sleep environment is essential, and effective settling techniques can significantly ease the transition to sleep. For babies, soothing strategies are vital. Gentle rocking, soft lullabies, or a warm bath can help signal that it's time to wind down. Skin-to-skin contact can also be incredibly comforting, offering both warmth and reassurance.

Harvey Karp from the Happiest Baby recommends the 5s for soothing and calming your baby.

1. **Swaddle:** It recreates the feeling of the womb and is the cornerstone of calming. If swaddling is the STARTING point, babies will respond faster to the following four steps. Wraps the arms snugly straight at the side but keeps the hips loose and allows them to be flexed.
2. **Stomach/Side Position:** Though the back is how we need to put babies down for sleep, comfort is best on their side or stomach.
3. **Shush:** WE explained how much babies love white noise. Shushing is considered a sound very similar to the one in the womb and will bring comfort.
4. **Swing:** Babies need movement as they also had it in the womb. To soothe a crying baby, you want fast tiny motions: support the head and neck and swing no more than an inch in either direction.
5. **Suck:** Babies calm quickly when sucking. We recommend using a pacifier to help settle.

Implementing the 5S's will take time and practice. For more details and tips, check out DrKarp'ss article:

<https://www.happiestbaby.com/blogs/baby/the-5-s-s-for-soothing-babies>



Routines

Creating a Consistent Morning Routine

A consistent morning routine reinforces your child's internal clock and promotes a healthy wake time.

- ✔ **Natural Light Exposure:** Upon waking, expose your baby to natural light to help regulate their circadian rhythm. (if living in a northern country, make sure to turn on the lights in the house and to head out as soon as it is bright and warm enough out)
- ✔ **Engage in Morning Activities:** Encourage activities that promote wakefulness, such as tummy time, playing on a play mat, following toys, etc.

The Impact of Light and Activity Levels

Light and activity levels play a crucial role in sleep quality. By managing these elements effectively, you can create an environment that supports restful sleep.

Natural light exposure regulates your child's circadian rhythm, particularly in the morning. It will also help manage the day/night confusion more quickly.

Here's why it matters:

Boosts Mood and Wakefulness:

Encouraging outdoor time during daylight hours enhances mood and promotes alertness.

Enhances Melatonin Production:

Exposure to natural light during the day helps increase melatonin production in the evening, aiding in easier sleep onset (Czeisler, 2013).

Preparing for Sleep with Quiet Time

Establishing a quiet time routine signals to your child that bedtime is approaching, reducing anxiety and easing the transition to sleep:

- ✔ **Relaxing Activities:** Incorporate activities like a warm bath, storytelling, or listening to soft music to relax your child's mind and body.
- ✔ **Consistency:** A consistent pre-sleep routine creates a sense of security and predictability, making bedtime smoother and more enjoyable.

By implementing these strategies, you can effectively manage early wakings and optimize the impact of light and activity levels, fostering a sleep environment that supports your child's well-being and growth.

Establish a bedtime routine

Establishing a consistent bedtime routine is a cornerstone of healthy sleep habits. This guide section provides practical planners and examples to help you create a routine tailored to your family's needs.

A well-structured routine signals the body that it's time to wind down and fosters a sense of security and relaxation.

Newborns tend to go to bed later. Around 9-10 p.m. for the first 3 months. We start seeing 7/7:30 p.m. bedtime work great around the 3-4 months old mark when we can begin to sleep training a little more.

Bedtime Routine

SAMPLE PLANNER

Time	Activity	Description
05:30 pm	Feed	Offer a feed after your child's last waking/nap
06:00 pm	Bath Time	Give your baby a warm bath or sponge bath to help them relax. Use gentle, calming bath products and play soft music or sing to make it enjoyable. This can also help signal that it's time to get ready for bed. Ensure the bathroom and bedrooms are warm so the baby doesn't get cold.
06:15 pm	Massage	Offer a baby oil or lotion massage on the change table or directly on your lap while sitting on the floor. This will bring connection, relaxation, and a lot of oxytocin.
06:20 pm	Pyjama Time	Put baby in comfortable pyjamas according to the room temperature.
06:30 pm	Read Together	Settle into a cozy spot for storytime. This is a wonderful way to bond and promote language development while also creating a soothing atmosphere.
06:45 pm	Feed	Offer a feed in a well-lit room and try to keep the baby awake so we can start working on independent sleep.
07:00 p.m	Cuddles and Bed	Have a cuddle, rock a little, or sing a round of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." Put your baby down on his back, drowsy but awake or fully awake.

Establishing a bedtime routine is crucial in promoting healthy sleep habits for children. While the sample bedtime routine provided serves as a helpful guideline, it is essential to tailor your routines to fit each child's unique needs and preferences. Every child is different; what works for one may not resonate with another.

Creating a personalized bedtime routine involves observation and flexibility. Please pay attention to your child's cues and responses to different activities, noting what seems to promote relaxation and readiness for sleep. It's perfectly normal for routines to evolve as a child grows and their needs change, so staying open to adjustments is key.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a sense of security and comfort that helps children transition smoothly from the day's activities to a restful night's sleep.

Your baby starts crying after being put down

For the first 18 months of their lives, babies' only way to communicate is through crying. As they grow older, they start to have the ability to whine, whimper, etc., to express their frustration.

But for the first couple of months, cries will be their only way to share that they have a need that is not met OR express that they do not love something.

So the first thing you would want to do when your baby cries is ensure that all of the primary needs are met:

Is baby hungry? Is the baby needing a diaper change? Was the baby able to get a good burp? Is baby too hot or too cold?

Next, make sure the environment is conducive to sleep: Is the room cool and dark enough, and is the sound machine on?

If all those needs are met, move on to the 5s method.

Finally, if the baby is settled but you can tell they are "fighting" it every time you put them down, try the shush/pat and pick up/put down method.

Shush/Pat and Pick up/Put Down method for newborns

This method combines two appropriate sleep training methods for newborns up to 8 months old.

It is based on Tracy Hogg's method.

You can start with your bedtime or naptime routine.

Please put your child down on their back while drowsy but still awake.

Please feel free to leave the room if there is no fuss or anything you are uncomfortable with.

If the baby starts crying, stop, wait and listen for about 30s/1 min. If the crying continues, pick them up for a minute or two to settle them down, then put them back down while STILL AWAKE.

We want to hear a cry, not a fussing. If the baby stops crying when parents pick him up, they put him back down immediately and start doing some shush/pat.

Could you put the baby back down as soon as they stop crying?

This can become a physically demanding technique, so I recommend using the shush/pat method. Please don't hesitate to give this method a try. It can work fantastically if done with perfect consistency.

For shush/pat, we are not aiming for independent sleep but some good habits.

This method is excellent for babies struggling to fall asleep or only want to contact sleep/nap.

Hold your swaddled baby on their side so they are all cozy facing you. Start patting their bottom rhythmically and such at the same time.

When the drowsiness starts, slow down the patting, apply less pressure, and do less shushing. When the baby is almost or fully asleep, you can slowly transfer to place them down on their back.

You can apply the same technique with the sleep surface already, but you need to roll them to their back once asleep gently.

Remember what we learned at the start of this guide: sleep is very organized for the first couple of weeks, and it's normal. The main three things you want to work on are:

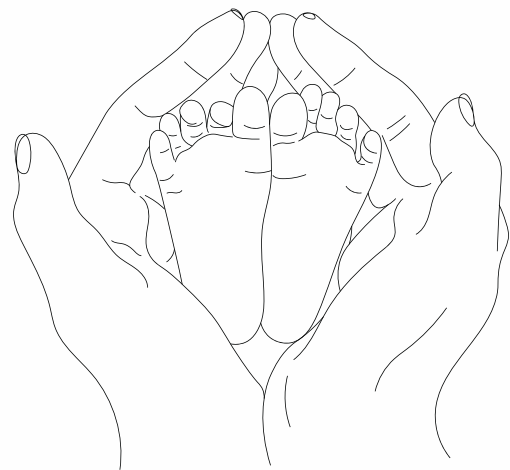
- Switch your baby's internal clock from night to day
- Work on putting baby down for sleep, "drowsy but awake."
- Establish a predictable routine with a schedule.

Common Newborn Sleep Mistakes

There is much to learn when you're a new parent or even with a new child who may act differently or have preferences other than those of their siblings. Common sleep mistakes with newborns can include things like:

- Waiting too long to put the baby down between naps makes the baby overtired and has difficulty falling asleep.
- Putting too many things on the baby's crib, such as decorations, bumpers, pillows, blankets, toys, or the baby's room. Avoid mobiles, bright colours, and complicated patterns. It tends to stimulate the baby too much.
- Keeping the baby too warm in blankets/clothing. Humans sleep better when cool: 18 to 20 degrees (65-68).
- Not establishing a distinction between night and day, i.e. letting confusion go on too long
- Assuming the snoozy newborn stage lasts forever (they quickly become more alert and aware of their surroundings)
- Letting baby sleep in the car seat (the occasional snooze is okay, but ultimately, you want to set consistent nap times)
- Not keeping up with tummy time/letting newborns stay on their backs all the time (this is a tough one because they are supposed to sleep on their backs to avoid SIDS, but it's equally important to practice tummy time during the day, so their heads don't become flat on the back and to help increase their head and neck strength.)

To top all those things to think of and watch for, around four months old, the baby has a significant development milestone that tends to impact their sleep. Most people call it the 4-month sleep regression, but I would advise you to stay positive and call it a progression!



4 months sleep regression

Oh, joy. Just when you start to feel like you're getting the hang of this parenting thing and establishing a sleep routine—WHAM! The first sleep regression hits!

It is, in my opinion, the hardest one because you don't expect it.

One thing that helped me get both my boys ready was the "Wonder Weeks" app. This great app enables you to understand babies' "mental leaps," which are linked to significant development milestones and often cause more crying, clinginess and disturbed sleep. But what's great about the app is that it shows you all the wonderful things your baby is learning and what you can do to help them practice and learn faster so they can move on.

So to get back to the sleep regression, take heart, it is normal. They feel like they last forever, but I promise they won't.

Being prepared and aware of what to expect will help your sanity more than you realize. Knowing they're coming and approximately when and how long they last, certain characteristics your little one may display, and how to handle regressions will help significantly in the long run. Because after the first one, there will be others. (Sorry!) Here's a quick run-down on what that first regression may look like: We often see night sleep being more erratic with more wakings. Naps tend to be very short and usually cause much frustration to parents who are used to having babies sleeping anywhere, anytime, and through anything. This is the best time to introduce (if not already done) an excellent sleep environment with a dark room and sound machine to block out other sounds and eliminate the swing or other sleep props.

During this progression, we see babies being more aware of their surroundings, starting to understand object permanence and its opposite (i.e., you leaving the room), starting to roll and holding their heads longer on tummy time. The abovementioned changes call for routine, as they will feel comfortable waking up in the same place and environment where they fell asleep.

Finally, for any sleep regressions, the keywords here are patience and consistency. Following a consistent sleep routine, maintaining healthy sleep habits, and sticking to it will allow your little one to "snap out of it" quicker.

Staying calm, being patient, and offering lots of snuggles, affirmation, and kisses during this time is helpful. I also highly recommend finding support in your spouse, other parents, and friends in similar life phases.

And remember, once sleep becomes more evened out again, your baby displays terrific new abilities in cognition, motor skills, and mental growth.

What now?

During the first year of life, you will see some fantastic changes right before your eyes. First, they grow at an impressive rate that humans never achieve again. The same applies to the number of things they learn in the first year, such as motor skills (they learn to walk) and cognitive skills (they understand you and start talking).

You'll go from witnessing night and day confusion to establishing naptimes to that first night in their room and bed. You will see them experience their first solid foods, their first word, that favourite toy they can't live without, and more facial expressions, noises and personalities than you can imagine. The first year is full of change, so be easy on yourself, be patient with your baby, and enjoy those fleeting times.

But please, don't ever feel like being tired, overwhelmed, or sometimes fed up means you are inadequate or not good enough. Parenting is the most challenging job, and nobody can prepare you. Try to surround yourself with people who will tell you that it's okay, that you are not alone, that they will offer help and mental support, and that they will remind you that this, too, shall pass.



Sleep Environment Checklists

Sleep Environment Checklist for Newborns

Room Environment

- Maintain a comfortable room temperature (65-72°F or 18-22°C).
- Use soft, dim lighting; blackout curtains can help create a dark sleeping environment.
- Consider white noise machines to drown out sudden sounds; avoid loud noises.

Sleepwear

- Dress the newborn in a lightweight sleep sack or swaddle to prevent overheating; avoid heavy blankets. Transition out of the swaddle when baby can roll

Bedding and Sleep Surface

- Ensure the crib meets safety standards; slats should be no more than 2-3 inches apart.
- Use a firm, flat mattress covered with a fitted sheet; avoid soft bedding and toys in the crib.
- Always place the baby on their back to sleep; avoid side and stomach sleeping.

Monitoring

- Use a reliable baby monitor to keep an eye on the baby while they sleep.

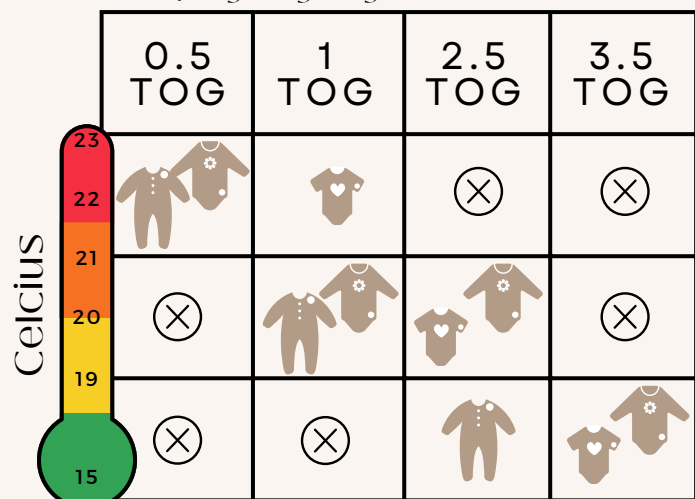
Do's

- Create a quiet & dimly lit environment
- Use a firm sleep surface
- Put your baby on their back

Dont's

- Place the crib near a window where the baby could pull down curtains, or be exposed to direct sunlight or drafts.
- Use soft bedding or toys

Sleeping bag togs & what to wear



Thank You



Thank you for choosing my sleep guide as a resource on your journey to better rest. I hope the information and tools provided have been helpful and empowering for you and your family. Your trust and commitment to creating healthier sleep habits are genuinely appreciated.

As you continue implementing these strategies, remember that each small step brings you closer to your goals. I am grateful to be part of your journey and am here to support you every step of the way.

Wishing you peaceful nights and joyful days,

Gala Doka
The Milky Way Sleep Company

Do you need more?

Maybe you had a great sleeper, and things have just started to slide since the last sleep regression? Maybe you are looking at weaning the night feed? Or maybe you are just looking at a coaching call? Have a look at my services and if you can't find anything that suits you, don't hesitate to contact me or to book a free consultation call.



www.calendly.com/themilkwaysleepco.com



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