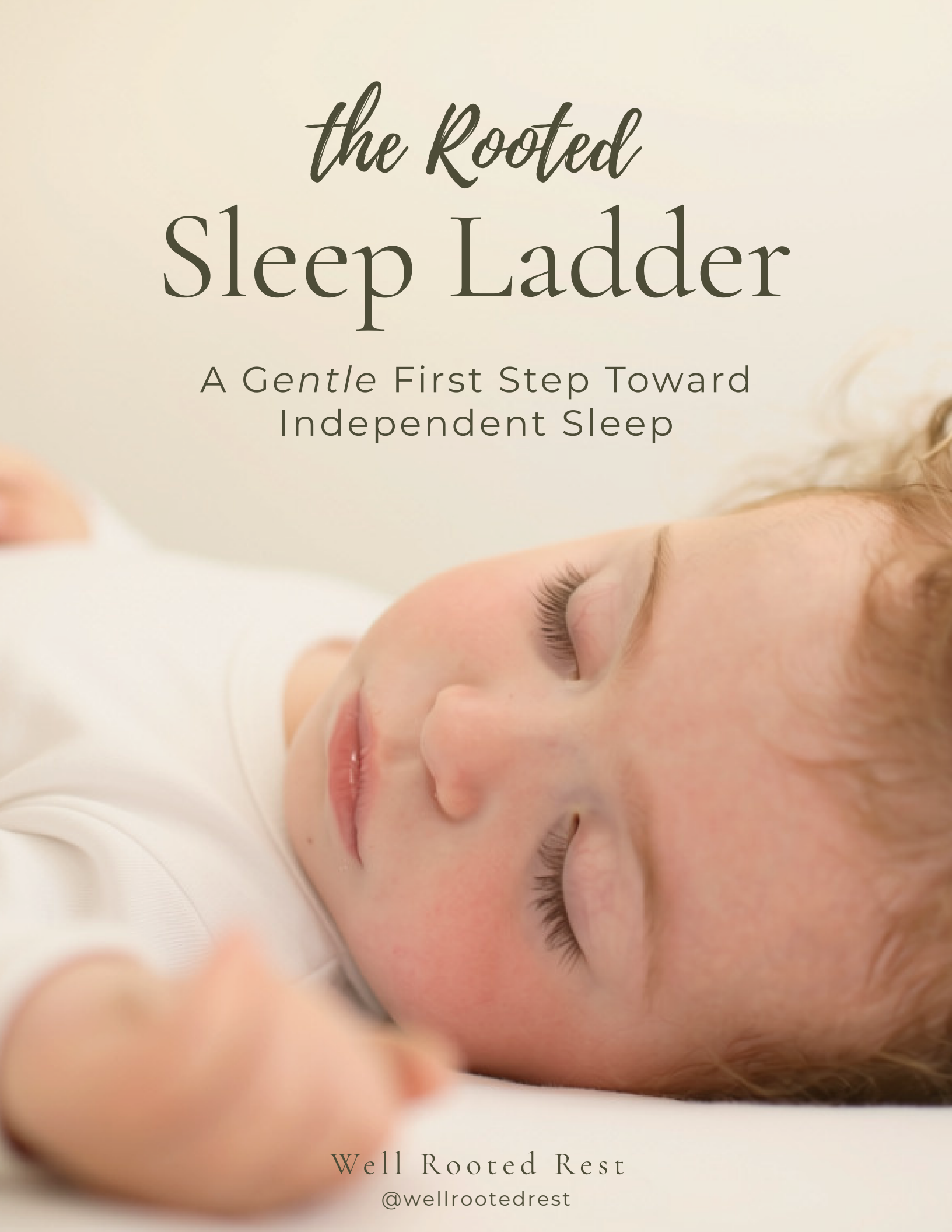




the Rooted Sleep Ladder

A Gentle First Step Toward
Independent Sleep

Well Rooted Rest
@wellrootedrest

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A Note From Well Rooted Rest

This mini guide was created to support parents who are looking for a gentle, responsive approach to baby sleep — one that honors both your baby's need for connection and your need for rest.

The Rooted Sleep Ladder is intended for babies ages **4–18 months** and was created to give you a simple starting point for understanding bedtime support and how it can be shifted gradually over time. It is not meant to replace the full **Well Rooted Rest Guide**, medical advice, or individualized support from your child's healthcare provider.

Take what serves your family. Leave what doesn't. Trust your instincts.
You know your child better than anyone else.

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Disclaimer

The information provided in this mini guide is intended for educational purposes only and *should not be considered medical advice*.

This mini guide is intended for babies ages 4–18 months. Every child is unique. Sleep needs, feeding needs, developmental milestones, temperament, and family circumstances vary widely. This guide is not intended to diagnose, treat, prevent, or cure any medical condition and should not replace advice from your pediatrician, healthcare provider, or qualified medical professional.

If you have concerns about your child's sleep, feeding, growth, development, breathing, safety, or overall health, please consult your healthcare provider. By using this guide, you acknowledge that you are responsible for any decisions you make regarding your child's sleep and care.

Hi, I'm Jade!



When my son was waking 8 to 10 times a night (sometimes every 45 minutes), I was also working 12-hour shifts as a labor & delivery nurse. If you've ever felt like you're surviving your days instead of living them — I've really been there.

Everything I was finding on social media made it seem like there were only two options. Cry-it-out, wait it out, or bedshare. None of those felt right for our family. But I remember wondering... *"How many more nights can I keep doing this?"*

So I kept digging. And I found a middle ground that most people weren't talking about — a process of slowly fading sleep associations night by night, so gently that your baby barely notices the shift until one day they're falling asleep on their own. No leaving them alone. No timed crying. Just small, consistent steps.

It took us about *three weeks*. And it worked. He was sleeping through the night. Four years later, after it worked for my daughter too, I put everything I learned into one affordable guide and created Well Rooted Rest.

I created it for the mom who wants more sleep but can't bring herself to do cry-it-out. The one who's exhausted but still so deeply in tune with her baby. You don't have to choose between rest and responsiveness.

You are in the right place.

You're Not Wrong

You're Not Doing It Wrong

If your baby needs feeding, rocking, bouncing, holding, patting, or your presence to fall asleep, that does not mean you have done something wrong. It means your baby has learned that certain cues help their body feel safe enough to rest.

Those cues are called *sleep associations*.

A sleep association is simply something your baby connects with falling asleep. Some associations are very parent-led, like feeding all the way to sleep or rocking until fully asleep. Others are lighter and easier to keep over time, like a sleep sack, white noise, a short bedtime phrase, your hand on their back, or your calm presence nearby.

The problem is not that your baby has sleep associations. We all do. The hard part is when the only sleep associations that work require you to do all the work every single time your baby falls asleep or wakes overnight.

That is where the *Rooted Sleep Ladder* can help.

Instead of removing comfort all at once, we can gently shift from stronger support toward lighter support over time.

Not through cry-it-out.

Not through timed crying.

Not by ignoring your baby.

Through small, responsive steps.

Inside the full **Well Rooted Rest Guide**, I show you exactly how to identify your baby's sleep associations and which one to fade first (hint: it's usually NOT what parents think) and how to do it without overwhelming your baby.

A Few Things To Let Go Of

Before we talk about changing sleep, I want you to take a deep breath. There is a lot of loud baby sleep advice out there. Some of it sounds confident. Some of it sounds urgent. Some of it makes you feel like if you respond to your baby one more time, you'll somehow be rocking them to sleep in their college dorm. You can release that pressure.

You can let go of the idea that comfort is weakness.

Comforting your baby does not make you too soft. It means your baby knows you are safe, steady, and responsive. You can still move toward independent sleep while offering connection along the way.

You can let go of the idea that crying is required.

Crying can happen when something changes, but your baby does not need to be left alone to cry in order to make progress. In this approach, crying is treated as communication. If your baby fusses, you stay close. If your baby escalates, you add support. If your baby becomes overwhelmed, you pause and comfort fully. No timed crying. No closing the door.

You can let go of the idea that feeds always need to be stretched.

Some babies still need night feeds. Some babies are genuinely hungry, growing, teething, distracted during the day, breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, or simply not ready for long stretches without feeding yet. Independent sleep and night weaning are not the same thing. You can work on sleep while still honoring your baby's feeding needs.

You can let go of the idea that feeding to sleep means you failed.

Feeding to sleep can be comforting, familiar, and deeply normal for many babies. The issue is not that feeding works. The issue is when feeding becomes the only way your baby can fall asleep or return to sleep, and it no longer feels sustainable for your family. That is where gentle fading can help.

The Rooted Sleep Ladder is one tool to help you take a first step toward lighter support.

Before You Start

Before You Start: What to Expect

The Rooted Sleep Ladder is meant to be gentle, but gentle does not always mean instant.

If your baby is used to falling asleep with feeding, rocking, bouncing, holding, or lots of hands-on support, shifting that support may feel new at first. That does not mean you are doing it wrong. It means your baby is learning a new way to fall asleep while you stay close, calm, and responsive.

For many families, meaningful progress takes about **2–3 weeks** of consistency. Some babies adjust faster. Some need more time. Temperament, age, schedule, feeding needs, sleep pressure, illness, teething, and developmental changes can all play a role.

The first few nights may take **longer than you expect**. Some babies settle in 20–30 minutes, while others may need 60–90 minutes of support as they adjust. I know... *not exactly the bedtime speed-run we were hoping for*. But longer settling does not mean the method is failing. It usually means your baby is practicing something new.

What About Crying?

Crying can happen during gentle sleep changes. Not because your baby is being ignored, but because change can feel frustrating. The difference is this: your baby is not left alone to cry. You are watching, listening, and responding.

- *If your baby is fussing or grumbling:* Pause for a moment, stay close, and offer light support like your voice, a hand on their body, patting, or shushing.
- *If your baby is crying harder or escalating:* Add more support. Use touch, pick them up if needed, and help their body calm.
- *If your baby is very upset or overwhelmed:* Pause the step. Pick them up, comfort fully, check for real needs, and help them settle before trying again.

What Is the Rooted Sleep Ladder?

What Is The Rooted Sleep Ladder?

The Rooted Sleep Ladder is a simple tool to understand different levels of bedtime support. It's one of the visuals I use in my [full guide](#) to help explain the full **Well Rooted Rest Approach** to independent sleep.

At the bottom of the ladder are stronger supports. These are the things that usually require more of your body, energy, and presence, like feeding, rocking, bouncing, or holding all the way to sleep.

As you move up the ladder, the support becomes lighter. Your baby is still supported, but you are slowly giving them more opportunity to settle with less help from you.

The ladder is not meant to be rushed.
It is not a checklist you have to finish in one night.
It is not a test your baby has to pass.

It is simply a visual tool to help you ask: “*What level of support does my baby need right now?*” and “*Is there one tiny step toward lighter support we can practice?*”

The ladder is the framework. Inside the [full guide](#) I'll show you exactly where to start, how long to stay on each step, what to do when progress stalls, and how to know when your baby is ready for the next step.

Some nights, your baby may settle with your hand on their back and your voice nearby. Other nights, they may need to be picked up, held, rocked, fed, or comforted more fully.

That does not mean you failed. It means you responded to the baby in front of you. Gentle progress is allowed to be flexible. **A tiny step still counts.**

The Rooted Sleep Ladder

MOST
INDEPENDENT



MOST
HANDS-ON
SUPPORT



Your child falls asleep and returns to sleep with minimal support.

Predictable cues that support sleep without hands-on help.

Remaining in the room without direct touch.

Using your voice to comfort and reassure from nearby.

Gentle touch paired with your voice to help your child feel safe.

Rhythmic touch or sound to soothe and support your child.

Holding your child close to help them relax and settle.

Gentle movement to help your child become drowsy or fall asleep.

Feeding your child to sleep.



Move up the ladder as your child becomes comfortable with less support.



Move down the ladder whenever more comfort, connection, or reassurance is needed.

How to Start Tonight

How to Use the Ladder Tonight

1. *Start where your baby is.* Make a note of current sleep associations to use as a starting point. Before changing anything, ask yourself:

- How does my baby usually fall asleep?
- What support helps them settle?
- What feels familiar and comforting?

2. *Add before you take away.* Before removing a sleep association, introduce a new source of comfort that can stay throughout the process, even while baby is in their crib or sleep space. You might add:

- A sleep sack
- White noise
- A short bedtime phrase
- A simple song
- Gentle patting
- A hand on their back
- A short prayer
- The same calm routine each night

3. *Change one thing at a time.* Do not try to jump from feeding to sleep straight to laying your baby down wide awake with no support. That is a BIG jump. Instead, choose one small step.

For example:

- Feed to sleep → Feed until calm
- Rock to sleep → Rock until calm
- Hold until asleep → Hold until calm
- Pat constantly → Pat less over time
- Hand on baby → Voice and presence

4. *Add support when needed.*

If your baby becomes very upset, move back down the ladder. Pick them up. Comfort them. Feed if needed. Help their body calm. Then try again when they're calm. The first night, this may take anywhere from 20-90 minutes. Adding support isn't starting over. It's part of responsive parenting.

Inside the [full guide](#), you'll find the complete step-by-step bedtime plan, including exactly what to do during night wakings, naps, early morning wakes, and setbacks.

How to use The Rooted Sleep Ladder



When to move UP the ladder

- ☐ Baby settled easily for several nights
- ☐ Crying stayed minimal
- ☐ Baby accepted less support
- ☐ Everyone feels ready



When to move DOWN the ladder

- ☐ Baby is sick
- ☐ Teething
- ☐ Traveling or schedule is off
- ☐ Developmental leap
- ☐ Baby becomes distressed
- ☐ Something doesn't feel right

Well Rooted Reminder: the ladder is not a race to the top. The purpose is not to remove you. The purpose is to slowly help your baby become comfortable with lighter forms of support while still knowing you are near, responsive, and safe. Move up when your baby is ready. Move down when your baby needs more help.

Think of the ladder as your map. The full guide shows you exactly how to walk it.

Bedtime Reset

Use this page to choose one small step for tonight.

1

MY BABY USUALLY
FALLS ASLEEP WITH:

- ☐ Feeding
- ☐ Rocking / bouncing / walking
- ☐ Holding
- ☐ Patting or shushing
- ☐ Hand on body
- ☐ Voice or presence nearby
- ☐ Other: _____

2

ONE CUE I CAN ADD
BEFORE CHANGING ANYTHING:

- ☐ Sleep sack
- ☐ White noise
- ☐ Dark room
- ☐ Bedtime phrase
- ☐ Gentle patting
- ☐ Hand on back or belly
- ☐ Same bedtime routine
- ☐ Other: _____

3

ONE TINY STEP I CAN
PRACTICE THIS WEEK:

Instead of: _____

I will try: _____

4

IF MY BABY GETS OVERWHELMED, I WILL:



Add more
support

☐

Pick them up
if needed

☐

Try again
when calm

☐

Pause and
adjust if needed

☐

Tonight's goal isn't independent sleep. It's one tiny step forward.
The full [Well Rooted Rest Guide](#) shows you exactly what that next step
should be based on your baby's age, temperament, and current sleep habits.

Ready for the Full Step-by-Step Plan?

~~\$37~~ \$27
TODAY
ONLY!



This is for you if...

- You want more rest, but cry-it-out does not feel right.
- You want a gentle plan, but you also need something practical.
- You want to support your baby without becoming the only way they can sleep.
- You want a middle ground between doing nothing and doing something that feels too harsh.
- You do not need to change everything overnight.
- You just need a clear next step.

Get the Full 120+ Page Well Rooted Rest Guide:

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL GUIDE](#)

Ready to Stop Guessing at Bedtime?

Imagine knowing exactly what to do tonight. Instead of piecing together advice from Instagram, Google, Facebook groups, and well-meaning relatives... you'll have one gentle roadmap from beginning to end. The *Well Rooted Rest Guide* gives you one gentle, step-by-step plan so you know exactly what to do tonight, tomorrow night, and when things don't go as planned. But if you're still wondering...

- **Where do I actually start?**
- **What if my baby cries?**
- **How do I handle night wakings and night feeds?**
- **What about naps?**
- **What if we co-sleep, contact nap, or have a very sensitive baby?**

That's exactly what the full *Well Rooted Rest* guide walks you through. Inside the full **120+ page guide with bonuses**, you'll learn how to gently help your baby move toward independent sleep *without cry-it-out, timed crying, or leaving your baby alone to figure it out.*

Inside the Full Well Rooted Rest Guide, You'll Finally Know...

- A gentle step-by-step method for fading sleep associations
- How to know when to offer more support and when to gently step back
- What to do when your baby cries, fusses, or gets frustrated
- How to respond during night wakings without undoing progress
- How to apply the method to naps and daytime sleep
- How wake windows, routines, and sleep environment affect bedtime
- How to transition from co-sleeping, contact naps, or heavy sleep support
- Age-specific schedules that take the guesswork out of your day.
- Troubleshooting help for setbacks, regressions, early wakes, or short naps
- Exactly what to do when teething, regressions, illness, or traveling
- Printable tools and worksheets so you always know your next step

**If cry-it-out doesn't feel right, but waiting another year doesn't either,
this guide was written for you.**

~~\$37~~ \$27 **TODAY ONLY!**

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL GUIDE](#)