



# SLEEP

# TRAINING 101

A roadmap to better nights for  
your family!



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# HELLO!

Hi! I am a mom to 4 (ages 12, 9, 6, and 3)! We live a very busy, on the go life so I understand working through busy schedules!

I graduated from University of MD in 2010 and started working at UMMC in 2011. I transitioned into nurse care management in 2016 and started at Sinai Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. I loved the kiddos and clinic but the drive kept me from my kids. I then started as a nurse care manager with Carefirst BCBS in 2017, where I still work today!

Along with my own experience (my first hated sleep and I started with anxiety every evening knowing what approached every night) and talking with so many parents over the years - sleep is a BIG issue. Some kiddos are great sleepers and don't need any intervention while you have some kids who seem to hate sleep!

I worked with the Cradle Coach for my own son when he was 3 years old. I then learned they had a sleep certification program that was in depth and required working with volunteers and jumped at it the opportunity! And here I am today!



# WHY IS SLEEP SO IMPORTANT?

1. Sleep supports brain development and is crucial for brain growth and memory consolidation
2. Sleep enhances cognitive function, such as problem solving skills and creativity
3. Sleep aids in physical growth – the body release growth hormones during deep sleep
4. Sleep improves immune function and reduces the likelihood of illness
5. Sleep improves behavior and social skills
6. Sleep regulates emotions, leading to improved behaviors



# SLEEP IS FOR PARENTS TOO!

## 1. Mental Fog and Memory Issues

- Struggling to concentrate or remember things, like forgetting appointments or daily tasks.

## 2. Mood Swings and Irritability

- Increased irritability, frustration, and being more short-tempered with children or partners.

## 3. Emotional Exhaustion

- Feeling overwhelmed by small tasks, easily anxious, or even more prone to tears.

## 4. Physical Fatigue

- Constant tiredness, lack of energy, and difficulty keeping up with day-to-day parenting duties.

## 5. Weakened Immune System

- More frequent colds or illnesses due to a weakened immune response.

## 6. Reduced Patience and Decision-Making Ability

- Making poor decisions or becoming easily overwhelmed by choices.

## 7. Relationship Strain

- Increased tension or arguments with partners due to irritability and lack of sleep.

## 8. Mental Health Risks

- Sleep deprivation can contribute to anxiety, depression, or exacerbating postpartum depression.



# THE DEBATE: IS SLEEP TRAINING HARMFUL?

## 1. Emotional and Behavioral Development

- Research shows that sleep training does not cause harm to a baby's emotional or behavioral development. A large randomized controlled trial found that infants who underwent sleep training methods such as the Ferber method (graduated extinction) showed no long-term negative effects on emotional development or attachment. In fact, sleep training often results in better sleep for both baby and parents, reducing stress levels for the family.

## 2. Attachment and Bonding

- Concerns about sleep training harming the parent-child bond have been refuted by studies. Sleep training does not interfere with a secure attachment as long as the child's emotional needs are met during the day. Studies confirm that attachment is formed through consistent, responsive caregiving, and brief crying during sleep training doesn't break that bond.

## 3. Parental Mental Health

- One of the benefits of sleep training is that it improves parental mental health by helping parents get more rest, reducing symptoms of parental exhaustion, depression, and anxiety.

## 4. Potential Short-Term Stress

- Some babies may experience temporary distress (crying) during sleep training, but evidence shows that this does not lead to long-term psychological issues. Studies have found no increase in cortisol levels (a stress hormone) over time in sleep-trained babies, suggesting that any stress experienced is short-lived.



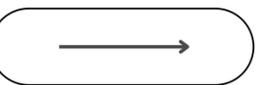
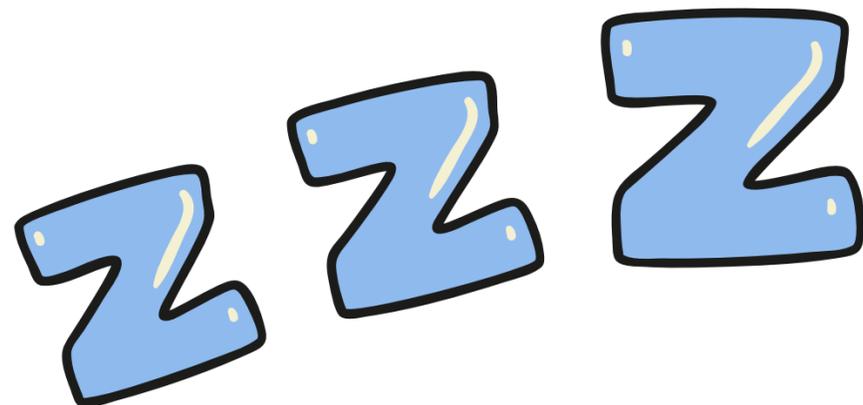
# THE DEBATE: IS SLEEP TRAINING HARMFUL?

My take:

Sleep training is a safe and effective option based on clinical trials

@thatsleepdoc: "an option, if you so choose!"

What is right for you and your family? Only you can answer that!



# NAP TRANSITIONS

- **Dropping from 2 to 1 nap:** Happens around 12-18 months, when toddlers take a longer midday nap.
- **Dropping naps completely:** Typically between 3-5 years old, as kids can go all day without needing a nap.

## **Signs a nap transition is needed:**

- Difficulty falling asleep for naps.
- Shorter or skipped naps.
- Trouble falling asleep at bedtime.

Transition gradually to avoid overtiredness!



# IF BEDTIME LOOKS LIKE THIS...

- **Multiple requests for water**
- **“One more hug”**
- **Leaving the room over and over**
- **Parents laying with their child until they fall asleep**
- **Night wakings that require help to fall back asleep**

**You're not alone.**



# THE TRUTH ABOUT TODDLER SLEEP

Sleep is biological

But **falling asleep independently is a learned skill**

Toddlers thrive with:

- Predictability
- Clear boundaries
- Consistent routines



# COMMON SLEEP HABITS THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS

If a child falls asleep with help, their brain expects that same help when they wake during the night.

- Falling asleep with a parent in the room
- Inconsistent bedtime routines
- Late bedtimes → overtiredness
- Negotiations and extra requests at bedtime
- Responding differently each night



# KIDS ARE EXCELLENT PATTERN DETECTORS

If something works once...

They will try it again.

If leaving their room gets:

- another hug
- another book
- another glass of water



That behavior becomes the bedtime strategy.



# WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF GOOD TODDLER SLEEP?

- Predictable bedtime routine
- Age-appropriate schedule
- Clear and consistent boundaries



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# START A BEDTIME ROUTINE!

Keep it simple and predictable.

Example:

- Pajamas / bath
  - Brush teeth
  - Read books
- Hugs and kisses
  - Lights out

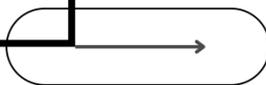
20–30 minutes total.

Same order every night.



# SLEEP TIMING

Age	Wake Windows	Total Time Awake
Under 2	5-5.5 hours	10.5 hours
2-2.5 years	5.25-5.75 hours	10.5-11 hours
2.5-3 years	5.5-6 hours	11-11.5 hours
3+ years	6+ hours	12-13 hours



# **OVERTIRED KIDS DON'T FALL ASLEEP EASIER**

Overtired kiddos actually become more wired

Signs of over tiredness:

- hyper behavior
- bedtime battles
- frequent night waking
- early morning wakes



# SLEEP TRAINING TECHNIQUES

## 1. Cry-It-Out (CIO) or Extinction Method

- Involves putting the baby down awake and allowing them to self-soothe to sleep without intervention.
- No check-ins from parents, even if the baby cries.
- I do not teach/practice this method

## 2. Ferber Method (Graduated Extinction)

- A more gradual approach with timed check-ins at increasing intervals while the baby cries.
- Parents provide brief comfort without picking up the baby, then leave again.
- Teaches self-soothing while offering reassurance to both baby and parent.
- Typically takes a few days to a week to see results



# SLEEP TRAINING TECHNIQUES

## 3. Chair Method (Fading)

- Parent sits next to the crib without intervening as the baby falls asleep.
- Gradually, the chair is moved further away from the crib over days or weeks, until the parent is out of the room.
- Helps the baby adjust to independent sleep gradually while still feeling the parent's presence.
- Often takes longer to work but is a gentle, low-cry approach
- I like this approach for toddlers to help build their confidence while still having a parent present in the room



# TIPS FOR PARENTS

**Stay Consistent:** Stick to routines, but be flexible if your baby is going through a tough phase. HOLD YOUR BOUNDARIES AND OFFER APPROPRIATE CHOICES.

**Support Systems:** Lean on your partner or family. If you are sleep training, I recommend taking turns as it can be emotionally and physically draining

**Don't Compare:** Every baby is different—what works for one may not work for another. It can take anywhere from 3-14 days to for sleep training (or more) depending on your approach and consistency.

**Celebrate Small Wins:** Progress may be slow, but consistency pays off! Sleep training, and sleep in general for kiddos, is not linear. You will have ups and downs and that is totally normal!



# Q+A

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**IF YOU WANT 1:1 SUPPORT AND BOOK IN THE NEXT 5 DAYS,  
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