

Co-Sleeping Without Guilt

A Gentle Guide to Safer, More Restful Nights

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A Note From Rachel



If you've found yourself wondering whether you're "doing sleep wrong" because your baby sleeps best close to you, take a deep breath.

You're not failing. You're not creating bad habits. And you're certainly not alone.

There are so many opinions about baby sleep that it can be hard to know what actually works for *your* family. If you've chosen to co-sleep, are considering it, or simply find yourself bringing your baby into bed night after night because everyone sleeps better that way, you deserve support-not judgment.

My goal with this guide is to help you understand how to make your sleep environment as safe as possible while also honoring the needs of your baby **and** your family.

Because good sleep doesn't have to look the same for every family.

You get to find what works for you. 💜

– Rachel

Nurturing Mama Services

Why Families Choose Co-Sleeping

Families choose to co-sleep for lots of different reasons—and there's no one “right” reason.

You might choose to co-sleep because:

- Your baby settles more easily when you're close
- Nighttime feedings feel easier and more manageable
- You love the closeness and connection
- Your baby wakes frequently and you're exhausted
- You've tried other sleep arrangements and they just don't feel right for your family
- You simply want more rest for everyone

Whatever brought you here, you don't have to feel guilty about wanting sleep **and** closeness.

The goal isn't perfection. It's finding a way for your family to rest that feels safe, supported, and right for you.

Safety First: Creating a Safer Sleep Space

The safest sleep arrangement is a baby sleeping on their back, on a firm, flat, separate sleep surface designed for infants, in the same room as their parent.

If your family is bed-sharing—or you find yourself falling asleep while feeding or comforting your baby—understanding the risks and reducing hazards is important.

A safer sleep space means:

- Baby on back
- If bed-sharing use a firm mattress-not a couch, recliner, or other soft surface
- Keep pillows/blankets away
- Keep baby away from gaps
- Keep baby's sleep area free of toys and other soft objects
- Never bed-share if anyone has used alcohol, cannabis, sedating medications, or anything else that could impair alertness
 - Never bed-share with other children or pets

Reducing Risk When Bed-Sharing

If you're going to bed-share, these are the situations where extra caution matters most.

- Keep other children and pets out of baby's sleep space
- Avoid bed-sharing after alcohol/recreational drugs or sedating medication
- Avoid bed-sharing if anyone in the household smokes or uses nicotine
- Avoid bed-sharing if you're extremely tired or difficult to wake.
- Bed-sharing carries substantially greater risk for babies under 4 months
- Babies born prematurely or with low birth weight have increased risk

Remember: There is no way to make bed-sharing completely risk-free. The goal of this guide is not to tell you what choice to make—it's to help you understand the risks and create the safest sleep environment possible.

This guide is for educational purposes and does not replace individualized medical advice. Talk with your baby's pediatrician about your family's specific circumstances.

What About Feeding & Night Wakings?

Nighttime feeding and waking can make even the best-laid sleep plans fall apart.

If you're breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, or simply comforting your baby, nighttime can feel endless. You don't have to choose between responding to your baby and getting some rest.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Whenever possible, feed your baby in a place where you can stay awake and alert.
- If you think you might fall asleep while feeding, avoid couches and recliners. These surfaces can be especially dangerous for infant sleep.
- If you bring baby into bed to feed or comfort, move baby back to their own sleep space when you're ready to sleep.
- Keep your baby's sleep space clear of pillows, blankets, and other soft items.
- Remember that frequent waking is normal for babies, especially in the early months. It doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong.

You can respond to your baby's needs without creating "bad habits."

Connection and healthy sleep can coexist.

You don't have to figure this out alone



If you're still wondering whether your family's sleep situation is "okay," take a breath.

There is no perfect sleep arrangement, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Your baby's needs will change, your family's needs will change, and what works tonight may look different a few months from now.

What matters is finding a way for your family to get more rest while keeping safety at the center.

And if you're feeling overwhelmed, stuck, or simply want someone to talk through your options with you, you don't have to figure it out alone.

That's where I can help. ❤️

I offer gentle, personalized sleep support for families who want more rest without leaving your values at the door.

Rachel

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Ready to talk? *Schedule a free 15-minute sleep assessment call*