A GENTLE SLEEP PLAN



The 7-Night Baby Sleep Reset

A gentle, step-by-step plan to help your 4 to 12 month old sleep longer, and to get your nights back

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From BabyReset: practical, gentle sleep help made for exhausted parents who want rest and a way they feel good about

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INTRODUCTION:

You Are Not Failing

You just need one clear plan, and now you have it

It is 3 a.m. Your baby is awake again, and you are standing in the dark, rocking, bouncing, and whispering. You already got up at 11 p.m. and again at 1 a.m. You are so tired that your eyes burn.

So you pick up your phone and type, "Why won't my baby sleep?" That is how most parents end up here. If that is you, I want you to hear this first: you are not doing anything wrong, and nothing is wrong with your baby.

You have probably tried a lot already. You have tried rocking, feeding, and holding your baby until they drift off. You have tried a new swaddle, a new white noise machine, and a new bedtime. You have read blog posts, scrolled through parent groups, and listened to well-meaning advice from everyone you know.

Here is the real problem. All that advice pulls in different directions. One source says to let your baby cry it out. Another says never to let them cry at all. One says to feed at night, another says to stop. When you are exhausted, you cannot sort through that. So you try a little of this and a little of that, and nothing sticks long enough to work.

This book fixes that. It gives you **one** clear plan, laid out one night at a time. It is called **The Nest Method**, and it has four simple parts that work together. You will not need to guess, and you will not need to read a giant book while sleep-deprived.

The plan is gentle. You will stay close to your baby, and you will never be asked to leave them crying alone for hours. You will help your baby learn a skill, falling asleep calmly, and you will help them with warmth and patience.

Here is what you will do in this guide:

- Understand why your baby wakes so often (it is not your fault)
- Make your baby's sleep space safe and sleep-friendly
- Set up a simple daily rhythm that makes sleep easier
- Build a short, calming bedtime routine
- Teach your baby to settle with less and less help
- Follow a 7-night plan, one page per night
- Handle night wakings, early mornings, and setbacks

> **Key takeaway:** Your baby can learn to sleep longer, and you can help them do it gently. You only need one clear plan and a little patience. This book is that plan.

A quick note on how to read this book. Skim it once today, all the way through, so you know what is coming. Then come back to it each night. Chapter 8 is the heart of the plan, and it is written so you can read tonight's page in two minutes and know exactly what to do.

Take a breath. Rest is on its way.

CHAPTER 1:

Why Your Baby Wakes So Much

What is really going on at 3 a.m.

Before we change anything, it helps to understand what is happening. When you know why your baby wakes, the plan makes sense, and you stop blaming yourself.

Babies sleep in short cycles. A grown-up sleep cycle lasts about 90 minutes. A baby's cycle is much shorter, around 45 to 60 minutes. At the end of each cycle, everyone briefly comes close to waking up, even adults. We just roll over and drift back to sleep without noticing.

Your baby wakes up between cycles, and then needs help. If your baby fell asleep while being rocked, fed, or held, they wake up in a different place than where they fell asleep. In the dark, alone in the crib, they think, "Wait, where did my rocking go?" Then they call for you. This is the most common reason for frequent night wakings.

Think of it like this. Imagine you fall asleep in your warm bed with your pillow. In the middle of the night, you wake up on the kitchen floor. You would be upset too, and you would call for help. Your baby feels something like that when the way they fell asleep is gone.

The skill your baby is missing is simple: falling asleep without needing someone else to do all the work. That is called self-settling, and it is a skill, not a switch. Babies learn it with practice, just like crawling or clapping.

Here are the usual reasons babies at this age wake a lot:

- **A sleep link.** Your baby needs rocking, feeding, or holding to fall asleep, so they need it again every time they wake.
- **A messy daily rhythm.** Naps that are too short, too long, or at odd times leave your baby overtired or not tired enough.
- **An uncomfortable room.** Too bright, too noisy, too warm, or too cold.
- **Hunger habits.** Your baby has learned to feed every couple of hours at night, even if they no longer need to.
- **Normal growth.** Around 4 months, sleep itself changes, and it can get lighter and more broken for a while.

Here is a quick look at what is common at each age. Every baby is different, so treat this as a rough guide only.

Baby's age	Typical night sleep	Typical naps	Common wake-up reasons
4 to 5 months	10 to 12 hours, with wakings	3 to 4 naps	Sleep changes, sleep links, hunger habit
6 to 8 months	10 to 12 hours, with 0 to 2 wakings	2 to 3 naps	Sleep links, teething, rolling and sitting
9 to 12 months	10 to 12 hours, often 0 to 1 waking	2 naps	Separation worry, standing, new skills

Notice that most babies **can** sleep long stretches at this age. That is why the goal is realistic. It is not a fantasy.

What this means for you: the fix is not a magic trick. The fix is to make your baby's sleep space predictable, set up their day so they are tired at the right times, and teach them to fall asleep with a little less help each night. That is exactly what the Nest Method does.

> **Key takeaway:** Your baby is not broken and neither are you. They wake between sleep cycles and have not yet learned to fall back asleep alone. That skill can be taught, gently.

CHAPTER 2:

The Nest Method

One simple system with four parts

You do not need ten different tips. You need one system you can follow when your brain is foggy. Here it is.

The Nest Method has four parts. Think of building a cozy, safe nest for your baby, then teaching your baby to rest in it.

Part	What it means	Where you will learn it
1. Prepare the Nest	Make the room safe, dark, calm, and the same every time	Chapters 3 and 4
2. Set the Rhythm	Give your baby a steady daily pattern of naps, feeds, and bedtime	Chapter 5
3. Teach the Settle	Use a calming routine and gentle help so your baby learns to fall asleep	Chapters 6 and 7
4. Steady the Nights	Respond to night wakings in the same calm way every time	Chapters 8 and 9

Here is why the four parts must work together. If you only fix the room, your baby may still be overtired. If you only fix the schedule, your baby may still need rocking to sleep. If you only teach settling, but the room is bright and noisy, it is much harder. When all four fit together, sleep gets easier fast.

The big rule of the Nest Method is consistency. Babies learn from patterns. When the same thing happens the same way, again and again, they relax because they know what comes next. You do not need to be perfect. You only need to be mostly the same, most of the time.

The gentle promise. The Nest Method is built on responding to your baby, not ignoring them. You will pick the level of help that feels right to you. You can stay right beside your baby, with a hand on them, or you can step back a little at a time. You are always in charge, and you can slow down whenever you want.

Here is what you will need. Most of it you already have.

Your starter checklist:

- ☐ A safe crib or bassinet with a firm, flat mattress
- ☐ A wearable blanket (a sleep sack) in the right size
- ☐ Blackout curtains or something similar to darken the room
- ☐ A white noise machine or app (optional but helpful)
- ☐ A notebook or notes app for quick tracking
- ☐ A partner, friend, or family member who knows the plan (if you have one)
- ☐ About 7 nights where you can be fairly consistent

How the 7 nights will feel. Many parents see change in the first three to four nights, and more steady sleep by the end of the week. Some babies take a little longer, and that is normal. Even small wins count. If your baby goes from five wakings to three, that is real progress and it will keep growing.

> **Key takeaway:** The Nest Method has four parts: Prepare the Nest, Set the Rhythm, Teach the Settle, and Steady the Nights. Do them together, be consistent, and respond to your baby with warmth.

CHAPTER 3:

Safe Sleep and Your Green Light

Before you start, make sure it is the right time

This chapter protects your baby, and it protects your peace of mind. Do not skip it, even though it is short.

Part 1: Safe sleep basics. These rules apply every time your baby sleeps, day or night. They come from long-standing guidance from pediatric health groups, and they matter more than any sleep plan.

Your safe sleep checklist:

- ☐ Always place your baby on their **back** to sleep, for naps and at night
- ☐ Use a **firm, flat** sleep surface made for babies, with a tight-fitting sheet
- ☐ Keep the crib **empty**: no pillows, loose blankets, bumpers, stuffed toys, or positioners
- ☐ Dress your baby in a **wearable blanket** instead of loose blankets
- ☐ Keep the room at a comfortable temperature, and do not overbundle
- ☐ Share a room with your baby but **not a bed**, ideally for at least the first six months
- ☐ Keep your baby's sleep space free of smoke
- ☐ Stop swaddling once your baby shows signs of rolling, and use a wearable blanket with arms free

If your baby rolls onto their tummy on their own, you do not need to keep flipping them back all night. Always put them down on their back, and let them move as they wish once they can roll both ways. Ask your baby's doctor if you are unsure.

Part 2: Your Green Light check. This is a quick check to make sure it is a good time to begin. Read through it and answer honestly.

Your Green Light checklist:

- ☐ My baby is **at least 4 months old** (if younger, wait and use this book later)
- ☐ My baby is **healthy right now**: no fever, no illness, no new medicine
- ☐ My baby is growing well, and I have talked with their doctor about night feeds
- ☐ We do not have a **big change** this week (travel, move, visitors, daycare start)
- ☐ I have **7 nights** in a row where I can be fairly consistent
- ☐ I have told my partner or helper the plan, and we both agree
- ☐ I know the plan is gentle, and I can slow down at any time

If you cannot check every box, that is okay. Fix what you can, and pick a start night when things are calmer. A week of waiting is better than starting in the middle of chaos.

Part 3: When to talk to the doctor first. Sleep plans are for healthy babies with normal sleep struggles. Please check in with your baby's doctor before starting if you notice any of these:

- Loud snoring, gasping, or long pauses in breathing during sleep
- Your baby arches and cries in pain after feeds, or spits up a lot
- Poor weight gain, or a doctor has told you to feed at night
- Signs of an ear infection, fever, or other illness
- Anything that makes you feel something is not right

Trust your gut. You know your baby best.

Part 4: Pick your start night. Choose a night when you can start fresh the next day, and when you do not have to be sharp at work the following morning. Many parents like to start on a Friday night, so the first few nights fall on a weekend. Write down your start night right now.

Part 5: Write down your why. On a sticky note, write one sentence about why you are doing this. For example, "I want to feel like myself again." Stick it where you will see it at 2 a.m. On the hard nights, that note will remind you.

> **Key takeaway:** Safe sleep comes first, always. Then check your Green Light: a healthy baby, 4 months or older, with a calm week ahead and a partner on board. If something worries you, ask your baby's doctor first.

CHAPTER 4:

Build the Sleep Nest

Make the room do half the work for you

A good sleep space tells your baby's body, "It is time to rest." When the room is the same every night, falling asleep gets easier, and so does falling back asleep after a waking.

This is the first part of the Nest Method: **Prepare the Nest.**

1. Make it dark. Light tells the brain to stay awake. Aim for a room so dark that you cannot see your hand in front of your face. Blackout curtains are the best fix, and they cost very little. Cardboard or foil over the window works in a pinch. If you need a light for night feeds, use a tiny, dim, warm nightlight and keep it low.

2. Keep it cool and comfortable. A room that is too warm is not safe and does not help sleep. Most families aim for about 68 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit (20 to 22 degrees Celsius). Dress your baby in light layers plus a wearable blanket. If your baby's chest feels sweaty or hot, remove a layer.

3. Add steady background sound. A white noise machine can help block out sudden sounds like doorbells, dogs, and siblings. Place it across the room, not right next to the crib, and keep the volume low, about as loud as a soft shower. Play it all night, and use the same sound every time.

4. Keep it boring. Remove anything that lights up, plays music, or catches your baby's eye. No mobiles, no busy mirrors, no screens. The crib should be a calm, quiet, plain place.

5. Use the same sleep spot. If your baby sleeps in the crib at night, try to use the crib for naps at home too. Babies learn sleep places. A spot that always means "sleep" helps a lot. Naps in the car seat or stroller will happen sometimes, and that is fine, but aim for the crib when you can.

6. Use a wearable blanket every time. The same sleep sack at every sleep tells your baby, "This is sleep time." Pick one that fits well, with the right weight for your room's temperature.

7. Offer a pacifier if your baby likes one. Pacifiers are safe and can help babies settle. If your baby takes one, offer it at the start of sleep. Do not worry if it falls out; the plan does not depend on it.

8. Think about the swaddle. If your baby can roll or is trying to, stop swaddling. A swaddled baby who rolls over cannot push up and is at risk. Move to a sleep sack with arms free. This can bring a few rough nights, but most babies adjust quickly.

Here is a simple table to check your Sleep Nest.

Part of the Nest	The goal	Quick fix if it is not right
Light	Very dark	Blackout curtains or cardboard on the window
Temperature	68 to 72°F (20 to 22°C)	Add or remove a layer
Sound	Soft, steady white noise	Put the machine across the room, volume low
Crib	Empty and plain	Take out everything but the sheet
Clothing	Wearable blanket	Switch from loose blankets to a sleep sack
Place	Same spot each time	Use the crib for most naps

Your Sleep Nest checklist:

- ☐ The room is very dark
- ☐ The room is a comfortable temperature
- ☐ White noise is on, low, and across the room
- ☐ The crib is empty except for the baby and a fitted sheet
- ☐ My baby has a wearable blanket that fits
- ☐ I have a plan for the swaddle if my baby is rolling
- ☐ I will use the crib for sleep as often as I can

Set this up one afternoon this week, ideally before your start night. It takes about 30 minutes and makes every other step easier.

> **Key takeaway:** A dark, cool, quiet, plain room gives your baby a clear message that it is time to sleep. Set it up once, keep it the same every time, and let the room do half the work.

CHAPTER 5:

Set the Daily Rhythm

A steady day makes for a steadier night

Here is something that surprises many parents: good night sleep starts in the daytime. A baby who is overtired, or not tired enough, has a much harder time falling asleep and staying asleep.

The second part of the Nest Method is **Set the Rhythm.** You do not need a strict clock schedule. You need a **rhythm**, a predictable pattern your baby can count on.

The key idea: wake windows. A wake window is the time your baby can comfortably stay awake between sleeps. If your baby is awake too long, they get overtired and cranky, and sleep gets harder. If you put them down too soon, they are not tired enough and will fight it.

Here are typical wake windows by age. Use them as a starting point and watch your baby.

Baby's age	Wake window	Naps per day	Total nap time
4 to 5 months	1.5 to 2 hours	3 to 4	3 to 4 hours
6 to 7 months	2 to 2.5 hours	3	2.5 to 3.5 hours
8 to 9 months	2.5 to 3 hours	2 to 3	2 to 3 hours
10 to 12 months	3 to 4 hours	2	2 to 3 hours

The first wake window of the day is often a little shorter, and the last one before bed is often the longest.

Sleepy signs to watch for. Look for these cues, and start the nap routine when you see them: yawning, rubbing eyes, staring off, looking away from you, getting quiet, or becoming fussy. Do not wait for full crying. By then your baby is already overtired.

Anchor the day with a wake-up time. Choose a wake-up time that works for your family, usually between 6:00 and 7:30 a.m. Open the curtains, turn on lights, and greet the day. Try to wake your baby at about the same time each morning. A steady wake-up time sets the clock for the whole day.

Feed well during the day. Offer full feeds when your baby is awake, ideally every 3 to 4 hours, depending on age and your doctor's advice. Babies who snack all day or feed lightly may make up for it at night. Full daytime feeds help night sleep.

Get daylight. Take a walk or sit by a window in the morning and afternoon. Daylight helps set your baby's body clock, and it helps them sleep better at night.

Protect the last nap. Try to end the last nap by about 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. A late nap can push bedtime too late. Aim to have the last wake window before bed be the longest of the day.

Choose a bedtime. Most babies at this age do well with a bedtime between 6:30 and 8:00 p.m. An earlier bedtime is often easier than a late one. A baby who is overtired falls asleep harder, so do not push bedtime later hoping they will sleep in.

Here are three sample days to show how it can look. Your times will be a little different.

Time	5-month-old (3 to 4 naps)	8-month-old (3 naps)	11-month-old (2 naps)
6:30 to 7:00 a.m.	Wake and feed	Wake and feed	Wake and feed
8:30 a.m.	Nap 1	Nap 1 (9:00)	
10:45 a.m.	Nap 2		Nap 1 (9:30 to 11:00)
12:45 p.m.	Nap 3	Nap 2 (12:00)	
3:00 p.m.	Nap 4, short		Nap 2 (2:30 to 4:00)
4:30 p.m.		Nap 3, short (4:00)	
5:00 to 5:30 p.m.	Last feed and play		
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.	Bedtime routine, then bed	Bedtime routine, then bed	Bedtime routine, then bed

If your baby's naps are short (30 to 45 minutes), do not panic. Short naps are very common, and they often get longer on their own as night sleep improves. For now, aim for the right number of naps at roughly the right times.

Your Daily Rhythm checklist:

- ☐ I picked a steady wake-up time
- ☐ I know my baby's wake window range
- ☐ I will watch for sleepy signs
- ☐ I will offer full feeds during the day
- ☐ My baby gets daylight in the morning and afternoon
- ☐ I will end the last nap by about 5:00 p.m.
- ☐ I picked a bedtime between 6:30 and 8:00 p.m.

Do not aim for perfect. Life with a baby is messy. If a nap goes wrong or a day falls apart, just get back to the rhythm at the next sleep. A steady pattern most days is enough.

> **Key takeaway:** A steady daily rhythm helps your baby get tired at the right times. Use wake windows, watch for sleepy signs, anchor the day with a morning wake-up time, and set an early, steady bedtime.

CHAPTER 6:

The Bedtime Routine

A short, calm ritual that says "now we sleep"

Now we get to the third part of the Nest Method: **Teach the Settle.** It begins with a bedtime routine. A routine is a short set of calm steps, done in the same order every night. Over time, your baby's body learns that these steps lead to sleep, and they begin to get sleepy on their own.

The routine is not about doing a lot. It is about doing the same few things, the same way, every time. A routine that is short and calm beats a long, fancy one.

Keep it to 20 to 30 minutes. Longer than that and your baby may get overtired, or you may get worn out. Most babies need just four or five steps.

Here is a simple routine that works for most babies:

1. **Feed.** Give a full feed at the very start of the routine, in a dim room. Do not let your baby fall asleep during this feed. If they get drowsy, gently stroke their cheek or tickle their feet to keep them just awake.
2. **Bath or wash-up (optional).** A warm bath can be calming for many babies. If your baby gets wound up in the bath, skip it, or do a quick wipe-down instead.
3. **Pajamas and sleep sack.** Put on diaper, pajamas, and the wearable blanket. Keep the lights low.
4. **Quiet time.** Spend 5 to 10 minutes in the sleep room. Read a short book, sing a soft song, or cuddle quietly. Keep your voice low and slow.
5. **Into the crib.** Say the same short goodnight words every time, such as "Time to sleep. I love you. Goodnight." Place your baby in the crib **drowsy but awake**.

Why the feed comes first. Many babies fall asleep while feeding, and then they link feeding to sleep. When they wake in the night, they need to feed again to get back to sleep. By moving the feed to the beginning of the routine, you break that link. Your baby still gets a full feed, but they do not fall asleep because of it.

What "drowsy but awake" means. Your baby is calm, relaxed, and maybe a little heavy-eyed, but their eyes are still open or half open. They know they are in the crib. This is the key moment, because it gives your baby the chance to practice falling asleep on their own.

Keep your own energy calm. Babies pick up on our feelings. If you are tense, worried, or in a rush, your baby may feel it. Take a slow breath before you start the routine. Soft lights, a slow voice, and gentle hands help both of you relax.

Do the same routine for naps, in a shorter form. Before naps, you can do a mini-routine of about five minutes: a diaper change, the sleep sack, a short song, and into the crib. The same cues build the same sleepy feeling.

Here is a simple routine planner to fill in.

Step	What I will do	About how long
1. Feed	Full feed in a dim room	15 minutes
2. Wash-up	Bath or quick wipe-down	5 to 10 minutes
3. Get dressed	Pajamas and sleep sack	3 minutes
4. Quiet time	One short book or song	5 minutes
5. Goodnight	Same words, then into the crib drowsy but awake	2 minutes

Your Bedtime Routine checklist:

- ☐ My routine has 4 to 5 steps and takes 20 to 30 minutes
- ☐ The feed happens at the **start**, not the end
- ☐ The lights are low from the first step
- ☐ I use the same goodnight words each time
- ☐ I place my baby in the crib drowsy but awake
- ☐ My partner or helper knows the routine too

If your baby usually falls asleep on you, this step may feel strange the first night. That is okay. Chapter 7 shows you exactly what to do when your baby is in the crib and not yet asleep.

> **Key takeaway:** A short, calm routine in the same order every night teaches your baby that sleep is coming. Feed at the start, keep the lights low, and place your baby in the crib drowsy but awake.

CHAPTER 7:

Teach the Settle

Help your baby learn to fall asleep, one gentle step at a time

This is the heart of the Nest Method. Everything so far has set the stage. Now your baby gets to practice the skill they have been missing: falling asleep without being fully put to sleep by you.

Here is the big idea. **You are not making your baby do this alone.** You are helping them do a little more of it each night. Think of it like teaching a child to ride a bike. You run beside them, holding the seat, and you let go a little at a time.

First, expect some protest. When you change how your baby falls asleep, they will likely let you know they are not happy. That is normal. They are used to the old way, and they are telling you so. This does not mean you are hurting them. It means they are learning something new.

Know the difference between fussing and real distress. This helps you stay calm and respond the right way.

What you hear and see	What it usually means	What to do
Whimpering, grumbling, short bursts of fuss, then quiet	Your baby is working on settling	Wait a moment, then use your chosen level of help
Steady crying that is rising and not calming	Your baby needs more support	Go in and comfort them, using your chosen level of help
Hard, panicked, or screaming cry that does not ease	Your baby needs you	Pick them up and calm them fully, then try again
Fever, vomiting, odd cry, or something that feels wrong	Possible illness or pain	Stop the plan and check on your baby, call the doctor if needed

You are always allowed to pick up your baby and calm them. Doing so does not ruin anything. If a night is too hard, you can calm your baby completely and try again later or tomorrow.

Now choose your level of help. There are three gentle levels. Pick the one that feels right for you and your baby. You can start at any level, and you can switch if one does not feel right.

Level 1: Stay and Soothe (the most hands-on)

You stay right beside the crib. You place a hand on your baby's chest or tummy, or pat gently. You say a soft "shh" or hum. If your baby gets very upset, you pick them up, calm them, then put them back down drowsy but awake.

Each night, you do a little less. First you pat, then you rest your hand still, then you only stand nearby. This level is a great fit if you want to stay very close.

Level 2: The Chair (the middle path)

You place a chair next to the crib and sit in it. You stay there while your baby falls asleep, speaking softly if needed. Every two or three nights, you move the chair farther from the crib: first halfway across the room, then to the door, then just outside.

Your baby always knows you are there, but gets a little more room to practice. This level suits parents who want a clear, step-by-step path.

Level 3: Check and Comfort (the most space)

You put your baby down drowsy but awake, say goodnight, and step out. If your baby cries, you wait a few minutes, then go in for a short check. You offer a few calm words and a gentle pat, but you do not pick them up unless they need it. Then you leave again.

You start with short waits (for example, 3 minutes), then lengthen a little (5 minutes, then 7). This level is for parents who feel ready for a little more space and who want faster results. It is okay to skip it. Many families do not need it.

How to pick. Ask yourself, "What feels right in my heart?" If you want to stay close, begin with Level 1. If you want a clear path to step back, try Level 2. If you want a quicker approach and feel confident, try Level 3. Whatever you choose, stay with it for at least 3 nights before changing.

Tips that work for all three levels:

- Use the **same calm words** each time, such as "You are safe. It is time to sleep."
- Keep your voice **low and slow**, and your touch **steady**, not jiggly
- Do **less** each night, even a little. A little less each night adds up
- If your baby is not settling after about 45 to 60 minutes, end the attempt, calm your baby, and try again later
- Praise yourself. This is hard work, and you are doing it out of love

Do not rush yourself. If you have to go slower than the plan, that is fine. A slow plan that you can keep going is better than a fast plan you abandon. Your baby learns from the pattern, not the speed.

Your Settle checklist:

- ☐ I picked a level of help (1, 2, or 3)
- ☐ My partner or helper knows which level I picked
- ☐ I know the difference between fussing and real distress
- ☐ I have my calm words ready
- ☐ I will stay with my level for at least 3 nights
- ☐ I know I can always pick up and calm my baby

> **Key takeaway:** Teaching the settle means giving your baby a little less help each night, while staying warm and responsive. Pick a level you feel good about, use the same calm words, and know you can always comfort your baby.

CHAPTER 8:

The 7-Night Plan

One page per night, so you never have to guess

This is the chapter you will come back to every night. Each night has a clear goal and a short list of steps. Read tonight's page before you start the bedtime routine, and nothing more.

Before you begin, a few ground rules:

- Do your **Sleep Nest** setup, your **Daily Rhythm**, and your **Bedtime Routine** every day of the 7 nights
- Use the **same level of help** from Chapter 7 for the first 3 nights
- Keep a quick note each morning: what time baby fell asleep, how many wakings, and how long each lasted
- If a night is rough, you did not fail. Just do the next night's page

Here is the whole week at a glance.

Night	Your goal	The main focus
1	Start the new pattern	Bedtime routine and first settle practice
2	Stay the same	Repeat, with a little less help at bedtime
3	Lower the help	Even less help, and your first night-waking plan
4	Steady the nights	Pause before responding to wakings
5	Line up the naps	Make daytime sleep match the new nights
6	Smooth the edges	Fix any weak spots
7	Lock it in	Review, celebrate, and plan ahead

NIGHT 1:

Start the new pattern

Your goal tonight is simple: do the routine and give your baby their first chance to practice. Do not expect perfect. Expect a learning night.

- ☐ Start the bedtime routine at your chosen time (feed first)
- ☐ Place your baby in the crib drowsy but awake
- ☐ Use your chosen level of help from Chapter 7
- ☐ If your baby wakes in the night, respond with the same level of help, and keep the room dark and the voice low
- ☐ Write a quick note in the morning

Expect some protest, and maybe a long bedtime. It is normal for Night 1 to take 30 to 60 minutes. You are starting a new skill.

Morning notes

NIGHT 2:

Stay the same

The goal tonight is consistency. Babies often do a little better on Night 2 because the pattern is familiar. Some do a little worse, which is also normal.

- ☐ Same routine, same time, same words
- ☐ Give a **little less** help than last night (for example, shorter pats, or move the chair a bit)
- ☐ Keep wakings calm and boring: low light, low voice, no play
- ☐ Note how long it took to fall asleep

Morning notes

NIGHT 3:

Lower the help

Tonight, you give a bit less again. This is also the night you set your plan for night wakings, which you will learn fully in Chapter 9.

- ☐ Same routine and words
- ☐ Use the **least help** you are comfortable with at bedtime
- ☐ When your baby wakes, wait a minute or two before going in, to see if they settle on their own
- ☐ If they need you, use the same level of help, and keep it short
- ☐ Offer a feed only if it is a normal feeding time for your baby (see Chapter 9)

Many parents notice a change by Night 3 or 4, such as quicker bedtimes or one fewer waking. If you do not yet see it, do not worry. Keep going.

Morning notes

NIGHT 4:

Steady the nights

Tonight is about holding steady when your baby wakes. This is where much of the progress is made.

- ☐ Same routine, same words
- ☐ When your baby wakes, pause for **5 minutes** before going in (unless the cry is hard or panicked)
- ☐ If you go in, use the smallest help that works: a hand, a “shh,” or your calm words
- ☐ Leave the room as soon as your baby is calm, even if they are still awake
- ☐ Write down how many wakings there were

Morning notes

NIGHT 5:

Line up the naps

By now your nights are shifting. Tonight, bring the naps in line so the day supports the night.

- ☐ Same bedtime routine, with the same level of help you used on Night 4
- ☐ During the day, use the **mini-routine** before each nap and place your baby in the crib drowsy but awake
- ☐ Use the same settle level for naps as for nights, and expect naps to be bumpier at first
- ☐ Keep the last nap ending by about 5:00 p.m.
- ☐ If a nap does not work after about 30 to 45 minutes, end it, and try again at the next window

Naps often lag behind night sleep. That is normal, and they usually catch up in a week or two.

Morning notes

NIGHT 6:

Smooth the edges

Tonight is about finding and fixing the weak spots. Look at your notes from the first five days.

- ☐ Which part is still hardest: bedtime, middle-of-the-night wakings, or early mornings?
- ☐ Is your baby overtired at bedtime? If so, try a bedtime 15 to 20 minutes earlier
- ☐ Is the room too light, too noisy, or too warm?
- ☐ Are you giving more help than your plan says? If so, do a little less tonight

Make **one** change, not five. Small, steady changes work best.

Morning notes

NIGHT 7:

Lock it in

Congratulations. You have made it to the last night of your reset week. Tonight, your goal is to do your routine the way you have been doing it, and to notice how far you have come.

- ☐ Same routine, same words, same level of help
- ☐ Look at your notes and compare Night 1 to tonight
- ☐ Write down what worked best, and keep doing it
- ☐ Celebrate: tell your partner, a friend, or yourself what you did this week

If your baby is not yet sleeping long stretches, do not feel discouraged. Many babies take 10 to 14 days to settle fully, and some take a bit longer. If you have stayed consistent, your baby is learning, and the skill is building.

Morning notes

A quick tracking table (copy this into your notes):

Night	Bedtime	Time to fall asleep	Number of wakings	Longest stretch	Notes
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

> **Key takeaway:** The 7-Night Plan is one clear page per night. Stay consistent, give a little less help each night, and judge your progress by trends, not by any single night.

CHAPTER 9:

Night Wakings and Early Mornings

What to do at 2 a.m. and at 5 a.m.

The fourth part of the Nest Method is **Steady the Nights.** Even when your baby falls asleep well at bedtime, they will still wake in the night sometimes. This chapter gives you a simple, calm way to respond every time.

The golden rule: keep the night boring. At night, you want your baby to learn that nighttime is for sleeping. That means low lights, low voices, no play, no talking, and no big excitement. Be kind and be quiet.

The Night Waking Ladder. When your baby wakes, go through these steps in order. Stop at the first step that works.

1. **Pause.** Wait 2 to 5 minutes. Many babies fuss briefly and then settle back to sleep without any help.
2. **Voice.** If the fuss grows, speak from the doorway or beside the crib: "Shh, you are okay. Time to sleep."
3. **Touch.** If needed, rest a hand on your baby, or pat gently.
4. **Comfort.** If your baby is very upset, pick them up and calm them. Then place them back down drowsy but awake.
5. **Feed (only if it is a real feeding time).** See below.

The point of the ladder is to start with the smallest help and only go up when you need to. Over time, your baby needs fewer steps.

What about night feeds? This is a very personal question, and the answer depends on your baby's age, weight, and health. Many babies still need one or two feeds at night at 4 to 6 months, and many can drop them as they get older. **Always check with your baby's doctor** about when your baby is ready to cut back on night feeds.

If your doctor says your baby no longer needs a night feed, here is a gentle way to cut back:

- Feed **only** at the times you have decided are normal feeding times
- Reduce each night feed a little every few nights (for example, a shorter breastfeed or a slightly smaller bottle)
- Replace the feed with the Night Waking Ladder
- Keep going until your baby no longer expects the feed

If your baby is hungry and needs a feed, feed them. This plan never asks you to withhold food from a baby who needs it.

A quick guide for night wakings:

What is happening	What it likely means	What to do
Short fuss, 2 to 3 minutes	Between sleep cycles	Wait, and let your baby settle
Crying that builds	Your baby wants help	Use the ladder: voice, touch, comfort
Waking at the same time every night	A habit, or a hunger pattern	Check with the doctor, then adjust gradually
Hard, panicked cry	Your baby needs you	Go in, comfort, and calm fully
Fever, vomiting, or odd cry	Possible illness	Stop the plan and call the doctor

Early morning wakings. Many babies wake early, around 4:30 or 5:00 a.m., and cannot settle. This is one of the hardest parts, and it usually improves last. Here is what helps:

- Treat anything **before 6:00 a.m.** as night. Use the same boring, quiet response
- Make sure the room is **very dark**, because early morning light can trigger wake-ups
- Check that your baby is not **overtired** at bedtime, because overtired babies often wake early
- Do not start the day until your chosen wake-up time. Wait until 6:00 or 6:30 a.m., then open the curtains and say “Good morning”
- Be patient, since early wakings are the slowest to fix

Take care of yourself too. You are not a robot. If you have a partner, take turns. One of you handles wakings on some nights while the other sleeps with earplugs. Even one protected night of sleep can help you feel like a person again.

Your Night Wakings checklist:

- ☐ I know the Night Waking Ladder
- ☐ I keep the night quiet, dark, and boring
- ☐ I have talked to the doctor about night feeds
- ☐ I treat wakings before 6:00 a.m. as night
- ☐ My room is very dark for early mornings
- ☐ My partner and I have a plan to take turns

> **Key takeaway:** At night, start with the smallest help and only go up the ladder when needed. Keep the lights low and the room calm, check with the doctor about night feeds, and treat anything before 6:00 a.m. as night.

CHAPTER 10:

When Things Go Wrong

Setbacks are normal, and you can reset in three nights

Here is the honest truth: sleep is not a straight line. Even after a great week, there will be a night when your baby is up again. This does not mean the plan failed. It means you are parenting a real baby.

This chapter helps you handle the bumps without panic.

Common reasons for setbacks:

- **Illness.** A cold, fever, or ear infection can disrupt sleep for days
- **Teething.** Sore gums can cause wakings, fussing, and drooling
- **Travel or schedule changes.** New places and time zones confuse little bodies
- **Growth spurts.** More hunger and more wakings for a few days
- **New skills.** Rolling, sitting, crawling, and standing can wake babies and keep them awake to practice
- **Separation worry.** Around 8 to 10 months, many babies get clingy at bedtime
- **Sleep changes.** Around 4 months and again around 8 to 10 months, sleep can get lumpy for a few weeks

What to do when your baby is sick. Put the plan on pause. Comfort your baby, give them what they need, and take care of their health first. When they are well again, go back to your routine. A sick baby needs you, and comforting them does not undo your progress.

What to do for teething and new skills. Offer comfort, and ask your baby's doctor about safe ways to ease teething pain. Give your baby lots of daytime practice for new skills (floor time for rolling, sitting, and standing), so they work on them during the day instead of at night.

The 3-Night Reset. When the setback is over, you do not need to start from zero. Use this short reset:

Night	What to do
1	Return to your full routine, your daily rhythm, and your chosen level of help
2	Give a little less help than Night 1, and use the Night Waking Ladder
3	Return to the level of help you were using before the setback

Most babies bounce back in about three nights, because they already know the skill. You are just reminding them.

A few more tips for tough moments:

- **Do not start something new in the middle of a setback.** Wait until things are calm
- **Stay with your plan.** Switching ideas every night confuses your baby
- **Check the basics.** Is the room dark, are naps on track, is the bedtime early enough?
- **Ask for help.** If you are stuck, talk to your baby's doctor or a trusted professional
- **Disagreeing with your partner?** Take a calm moment together when your baby is asleep, and agree on one plan
- **Be kind to yourself.** Everyone has a rough night

When to call the doctor. Reach out if your baby has a fever, is hard to wake, refuses feeds, has trouble breathing, cries in a way that is very different from usual, or if you simply feel that something is not right. You know your baby best.

A quick "What went wrong?" check:

- ☐ Is my baby sick, teething, or going through a growth spurt?
- ☐ Did the schedule or the room change?
- ☐ Is my baby overtired or undertired?
- ☐ Am I giving more help than my plan says?
- ☐ Are my partner and I using the same plan?
- ☐ Is my baby comfortable (not too hot or cold, no wet diaper)?

> **Key takeaway:** Setbacks are normal and short. Pause the plan when your baby is sick, then use the 3-Night Reset to get back on track. Your baby already knows the skill, so you are only reminding them.

CONCLUSION:

Your Nights Are Coming Back

You have everything you need, and you are already doing so well

Look at how far you have come. You started this guide tired, worried, and unsure of what to do. Now you have a clear plan, one you can follow even when your brain is foggy.

Here is what you now have:

- **The Nest Method**, a simple four-part system: Prepare the Nest, Set the Rhythm, Teach the Settle, and Steady the Nights
- A **safe, sleep-friendly room** set up the right way
- A **daily rhythm** with wake windows, naps, and a steady bedtime
- A short, calm **bedtime routine** your baby will come to love
- Three gentle **levels of help**, so you can choose what fits your heart
- A **7-night plan**, one page per night
- A **ladder** for handling night wakings and early mornings
- A **3-Night Reset** for setbacks

Most important, you have the knowledge that your baby is not broken and you are not failing. Sleep is a skill, and your baby is learning it with your love and help. Every night you stay consistent, you are building something that will last.

Some nights will be easier than others. That is okay. What matters is the pattern over time. Pay attention to small wins: a shorter bedtime, a longer stretch, a calmer waking. Those wins add up quickly.

And please remember to take care of yourself, too. Rest when you can, ask for help, and be gentle with yourself on the hard days. You are a good parent, and the fact that you are reading this proves it.

Your next steps this week:

- ☐ **Today:** Read through the book once, from start to finish
- ☐ **Today:** Complete the Green Light checklist in Chapter 3, and talk to your baby's doctor about any worries or night feeds
- ☐ **Within 2 days:** Set up the Sleep Nest from Chapter 4 (dark room, temperature, white noise, sleep sack)
- ☐ **Within 2 days:** Pick your wake-up time, bedtime, and wake windows from Chapter 5
- ☐ **Within 3 days:** Plan your bedtime routine from Chapter 6, and choose your level of help from Chapter 7
- ☐ **Within 3 days:** Tell your partner or helper the plan, and write your "why" on a sticky note
- ☐ **Your start night:** Begin Night 1 from Chapter 8
- ☐ **Each morning:** Write a quick note about the night
- ☐ **Night 7:** Look back, celebrate, and keep going

You do not need to be perfect. You only need to begin. One calm, consistent night at a time, you will get there.

Sweet dreams to you and your little one.

Want help making bedtime work for your family?

If you and a co-parent share bedtime, or an older child needs you just as the baby is settling, you can explore ParCalm for help planning a routine that fits your family.

Explore ParCalm at parcalm.com