

# SLEEP TRAINING



No parent wants to hear their child cry. It sounds like they are suffering, and it is natural to want to soothe them. On the other hand, children need to learn to go to sleep on their own.

If and when to start sleep training is controversial. Research has shown us that babies do not develop their own melatonin or regulation of their sleep cycles until 3+ months. With this in mind, many medical sources recommend starting after four months of age.

Whether you wait until 4 months or 24 months old, please be assured that prioritizing your mental and emotional health is **never** a poor parenting choice. Fatigue can significantly affect your health and presence in your child's life. Ultimately, sleep training your baby may benefit everyone in the long term.

**The truth about getting your baby to sleep:** it's not easy, it's rarely quick and it's usually a little loud and heartbreaking for a few nights... or more.



Below is an alternative to some of the popular sleep training methods including crying it out (like the Ferber or Weissbluth methods), or no tears methods (like the No Cry Sleep Solution). The idea behind these steps are to help baby feel safe and secure and to know that her parents are always there for her.

**Before you begin:** Please ensure you have spoken with your primary care physician regarding your baby's overall health and that her sleeping patterns aren't a symptom of something else going on.

## STEP 1: COMMIT

- Whatever sleep method you choose, write it down and commit to doing it for a full 10 days! Backtracking will backfire.

## STEP 2: CHOOSE YOUR MOST VALUABLE HOURS OF SLEEP FOR YOURSELF:

- Seven hours for babies >12 months, e.g., 11pm - 6am
- Five-six hours for babies > 4 months
- Not recommended for younger than 4 months of age

## THE FIRST THREE NIGHTS:

- Nurse until 11 p.m. and put to sleep
- When baby wakes at night, provide comfort without nursing first
- Hugs, soothing touch, cuddles, soft words
- You may nurse briefly, but ensure your baby doesn't fall asleep at the breast. Lay them back down to sleep while they are still awake. Encourage them to learn to fall asleep with your comforting presence beside them, not relying on nursing for comfort.
- Repeat this routine whenever baby wakes.
- At 6 AM, start your regular morning routine, ignoring the previous seven hours patterns.
- These will be hard nights.

## THE SECOND THREE NIGHTS:

- Stop nursing after 11 PM wake-ups
- Provide comfort without feeding during wake-ups (see previous suggestions)
- By the end of the 6th night, your baby is going back to sleep without being nursed or fed.
- Babies may protest for varying durations during these nights. Trust that a well-loved baby will benefit from better sleep patterns.

## THE NEXT FOUR NIGHTS

- Do not pick up or hug baby during wake-ups after 11 p.m.
- Use only soothing touch and voice to help baby back to sleep.

## AFTER 10 NIGHTS

- Provide minimal interaction during wake-ups.
- It may take additional nights for the new pattern to fully establish.

## TRAVELING, ILLNESS, ETC

Do what you need to do (cuddle, nurse, walk, in the middle of the night, as many times as you need to!) and then spend a night or two or three getting back to the new established pattern.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Trust your instincts and adjust the sleep plan accordingly.
- Consistency and patience are key to success.