

Children Older Than 12 Months

Remember that bedtime routines are still important. Your child should be put to bed awake and stay there. If your child comes out of the bedroom, calmly and firmly return her to her bed without talking to her. Repeat this response until the child stays in bed.

If your child has nightmares, calm and reassure her. Encourage her to stay in her own bed. Some children need a night light in order to sleep.

Many children give up their morning naps between 12 and 18 months of age and afternoon naps between 3 and 4 years of age.

References

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- *SIDS Foundation. R. Kaufman, personal communication, March 8, 2006.

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Helping CHILDREN SLEEP



Learning to Sleep

Many children's sleep problems occur because parents frequently rock, walk or feed baby to fall asleep. As soon as possible, start putting your baby to bed awake. The baby can then learn to self-soothe and begin to associate the crib with falling asleep.

Your Baby Birth to 3 Months

Newborns do not have the ability to sleep through the night. Your baby will eat, sleep and wake around the clock for the first 6 weeks. After 6 weeks, your baby will start to sleep more at night. Put your baby on his back in the crib to sleep.

- Some babies like to be wrapped in a blanket. However, the *SIDS Foundation reminds parents to keep the baby's arms out when swaddling.
- Keep the room dark and quiet during night feedings so your baby does not get over-stimulated.
- The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends that a baby sleep in a crib, in the parents' room for the first 6 months of life.
- As soon as possible, start putting your baby in the crib when she is drowsy, but awake. Your baby will then learn to associate the crib with sleep.

Your Baby 3 to 6 Months

Put your baby down to sleep on his back while drowsy but awake. If baby cries, pick him up. When he is quiet, lay him down. Repeat this as often as necessary.

If baby rolls over in his sleep, you do not need to return him to his back at this stage.

Around 4 months of age, most babies start to settle into a pattern of having 3 naps a day. Morning and early afternoon naps last around 90 minutes. Your baby may wake after 30 to 45 minutes. This is not a full nap. Try to soothe your baby back to sleep with a lullaby and soft talking. The third nap, in the late afternoon, usually lasts 30 to 45 minutes.

Baby will gradually learn to self-soothe.

Bedtime Routines for Babies and Children

Keep bedtime routines the same every time you put your child to bed. Reading or singing lullabies can be calming and help baby relax. Keep 5 to 10 minutes of the bedtime routine in the child's bedroom.



Your Baby 6 to 12 Months

Continue to teach your baby to fall asleep without rocking, walking and feeding. Put your baby in the crib when he is drowsy but awake.

If baby has difficulty falling asleep by himself, try one of the following methods.

1. Put baby to bed awake. If baby cries, pick him up. When calm but still awake, lay him down. Repeat this as often as necessary until baby learns to fall asleep on his own.
2. Sit beside the crib until baby falls asleep. Each night move the chair a little further from the crib until you are in the doorway and then out of sight.
3. Put baby to bed awake. If he cries, come back to calm baby every few minutes, gradually increasing the amount of time you are away from the baby.

Good Sleep Habits

Parents have a responsibility to help their baby develop good sleep habits. Many parents do not realize that they, not their babies, need to control bedtimes.

Babies who sleep well are in a better mood, get sick less often and learn better. Babies with poor sleep habits can be cranky and irritable.