



# NEWBORN SLEEP BASICS

*Simple, gentle foundations for  
better sleep*





**Congratulations on your new little one!**

If you're feeling a mix of love, exhaustion, and "am I doing this right?"—you are not alone. The early days of motherhood are beautiful, but they can also feel overwhelming, especially when sleep is unpredictable.

The good news is that healthy sleep is something your baby can learn—and you can gently guide them there.

This guide will walk you through simple, foundational sleep principles to help you understand your baby's needs, create healthy habits, and feel more confident in your routine.

Take what works for your family, leave what doesn't, and remember—consistency over perfection always wins.

You've got this, and I'm here to support you every step of the way.

— Nighty Night Nurse

# SLEEP BASICS



## Sleep Foundations

- Babies are born with reversed Circadian Rhythms, Day and Night are reversed.
  - Try to keep lights on during the day when feeding and playing, but keep lights low or off when feeding at night.
  - Babies are very sensitive to light, black out curtains for naps are highly encouraged
- Babies don't make melatonin until 8 weeks.
- They don't have a complete sleep cycle until about 3-4 months, at this point they wake up between each cycle. This is when learning independent sleep through sleep training is important.
- If you sleep train and they are gaining weight on their appropriate curve, babies can sleep through the night as early as 3.5-4 months.



## Feeding & Schedules



- Babies do not need to be woken up at night if they are gaining appropriate weight.
  - Increased feeds during the day will help decrease need overnight.
  - Feeding on a schedule with additional cluster feeds will help. (7am, 10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, and as needed)
  - Feed only at the beginning of the nap and bedtime routine to avoid feeding to sleep association.



## Sleep Associations



- Consistency is EVERYTHING! If you do not want to do something forever, don't start now. If a child falls asleep rocking, feeding, patting, co-sleeping, then they will expect it every time they need to fall asleep.
  - Sleep associations are only a problem if they don't work for you and your family, no judgement from me.
- Keep a baby's morning wake up time, first nap, and bedtime consistent.
- Nap times should be based on age appropriate wake windows until they are down to 2 naps, then it should be schedule based.
- Put them down 5 minutes before the wake window is ending, once sleepy cues are showing they are already overtired.

# SLEEP REGRESSION

## 4 Months

caused by rolling, linking adult sleep cycles, teething starts

## 6 Months

caused by sitting milestones, and dropping from 4 to 3 naps

## 8-10 Months

caused by crawling, standing; separation anxiety can peak

## 12 Months

caused by walking or decreasing to 1 nap

## 18 Months

caused by molars, walking, testing boundaries, and new skills

## 24 Months

caused by teething and testing boundaries

## Why are we having a regression?

- Do we have appropriate wake windows, do we need to drop a nap? Are they having too much daytime sleep?
- Are they eating enough? Did you introduce a new food upsetting their stomach?
- Did they add a new skill? Are they practicing enough during the day?
- Are they teething? Try Tylenol, frozen breastmilk to chew on, frozen wet wash cloths.
- Do they have a sleep association that has started by accident?



# HELPFUL TIPS

## Tips to Combat Regression

- CONSISTENCY!!! Do not fall back into bad habits. Hold boundaries!
- If you stay consistent in your pre-bedtime/nap routines, regressions will end quicker.
- Most of the time random sleep disturbances are because of teething, Tylenol is your friend!
- Teething can be anytime between 2 months-33 months, embrace what works for your little one!
- Let them practice their skills often during the day so they don't feel the need to practice in the middle of the night.

## Practical Sleep Tips

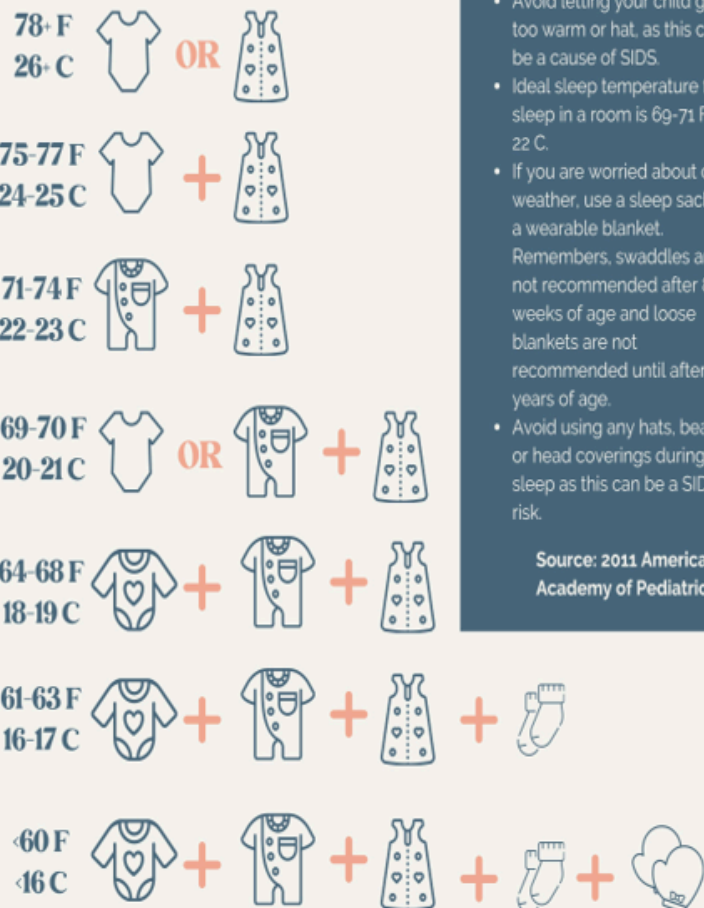
- Babies at 3.5-4 months should be unswaddled or if they show signs of rolling earlier.
- To transfer an asleep baby, wait 8 minutes after they are asleep (if you kiss their head they don't flinch), putting their feet down first and keep a hand on them doing gentle rocks until they stop stirring.
- Babies are very noisy sleepers. Wait 5-7 minutes to intervene at night so you don't wake them up.
- Car naps: less than 30 minutes, continue with their regular wake window. Longer than 30 minutes, stretch it to a full nap and consider it a nap and restart the wake window timer.
- Naps should not be longer than 1.5-2 hours in the first year, with exceptions of sickness as long as it's not affect night time sleep.
- Babies should be laid on their backs with nothing in the crib with them until 12 months



# Decoding Newborn Cues



## HOW TO DRESS YOUR CHILD



- Avoid letting your child get too warm or hot, as this can be a cause of SIDS.
- Ideal sleep temperature for sleep in a room is 69-71 F/19-22 C.
- If you are worried about cold weather, use a sleep sack or a wearable blanket. Remember, swaddles are not recommended after 8 weeks of age and loose blankets are not recommended until after 2.5 years of age.
- Avoid using any hats, beanies, or head coverings during sleep as this can be a SIDS risk.

Source: 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics,



## FEEDING CHART

AGE	FEEDS PER DAY	SOLIDS
0-12 WEEKS	<p><u>BREASTFED</u> ON-DEMAND 10-45 MINS/SESSION</p> <p><u>FORMULA/BOTTLE</u> 2-4 OZ/FEED 5-6 TIMES PER DAY</p>	NONE
4-6 MONTHS	<p><u>BREASTFED</u> 4-5 10-20 MINS/SESSION</p> <p><u>FORMULA/BOTTLE</u> 4-6 OZ/FEED 5-6 TIMES PER DAY</p>	NONE, BUT A PEDIATRICIAN MAY APPROVE TRIAL OF BABY CEREAL (1-2 TBSP/DAY)
8-12 MONTHS	<p><u>BREASTFED</u> 3-4 10-20 MINS/SESSION</p> <p><u>FORMULA/BOTTLE</u> 4-6 OZ/FEED 3-4 TIMES PER DAY</p>	<p>AFTER PEDIATRICIAN APPROVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 SOLID MEALS</li> <li>• 6-8 OZ DAIRY</li> <li>• 2-4 TBSP GRAINS</li> <li>• 3-4 TBSP FRUIT</li> <li>• 3-4 TBSP PROTIEIN</li> </ul>
AFTER 12 MONTHS	<p>16-20 OZ PER DAY WHOLE MILK OR TODDLER FORMULA AS DIRECTED BY PEDIATRICIAN</p>	<p>3/4 - 1 CP OF FEEDS- 4 TIMES A DAY, PLUS 1-2 SNACKS BETWEEN MEALS</p>

These are only guidelines and should not supersede your medical professional's recommendations or dietary guidelines.

# NEED MORE SUPPORT?

Hi, I'm Justine Hastings, Certified Pediatric Sleep Consultant and Registered Nurse.

I have been an ICU nurse for 8+ years in Boston, MA then continued my education by getting my Masters in Nursing Education. Once I had my son, I had a passion to learn more about sleep cycles and how to improve my families sleep. As a pediatric sleep consultant, I am committed to making a positive impact on the lives of families by addressing sleep challenges in children. With a background in nursing education, I bring expertise and empathy to every consultation, working closely with parents to develop effective sleep strategies tailored to their child's unique needs. Being a mom, I know how important and precious sleep is, so lets get sleep back in your home!

Book a free discovery  
call today!



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