



United Way
of Utah County

July 2009 A Newsletter for "Welcome Baby" and "Parents as Teachers" Families



All About Sleep

Sleep — or lack of it — is probably the most-discussed aspect of baby care. New parents discover its vital importance those first few weeks and months. The quality and quantity of an infant's sleep affects the well-being of everyone in the household — it's the difference between being cheerful, alert parents and members of the walking dead.

And sleep struggles rarely end with a growing child's move from crib to bed. It simply changes form. Instead of cries, it's pleas or refusals. Instead of a feeding at 3:00 AM, it's a nightmare or request for water.

So how **do** you get your child to bed through the cries, screams, avoidance tactics, and pleas? How should you respond when you're awakened in the middle of the night? And how much sleep is enough for your child?

How Much Is Enough?

It all depends on your child's age. Charts that list the hours of sleep likely to be required by an infant or a 2-year-old may cause concern when individual differences aren't considered. These numbers are simply averages reported for large groups of children of particular ages.

There's no magical number of hours required by **all** kids in a certain age group. Two-year-old Sarah might sleep from 8:00 PM to 8:00 AM, whereas 2-year-old Johnny is just as alert the next day after sleeping from 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM. Still, sleep is very important to a child's well-being. The link between a child's lack of sleep and his or her behavior isn't always obvious. When adults are tired, they can either be grumpy or have low energy, but kids can become hyper, disagreeable, and have extremes in behavior.

Most kids' sleep requirements fall within a predictable range of hours based on their age, but each child is a unique individual with distinct sleep needs. Here are some approximate numbers based on

age, accompanied by age-appropriate pro-sleep tactics.

Babies (up to 6 Months)

There is no sleep formula for newborns because their internal clocks aren't fully developed yet. They generally sleep or drowse for 16 to 20 hours a day, divided about equally between night and day.

Newborns should be awakened every 3 to 4 hours until their weight gain is established, which typically happens within the first couple of weeks. After that, it's OK if a baby sleeps for longer periods of time. But don't get your slumber hopes up just yet — most infants won't snooze for extended periods of time because they get hungry.

Newborns' longest sleep periods are generally 4 or 5 hours — this is about how long their small bellies can go between feedings. If newborns do sleep for a while, they will likely be extra hungry during the day and may want to nurse or get the bottle more frequently.

Just when parents feel that sleeping through the night seems like a far-off dream, their baby's sleep time usually begins to shift toward night. At 3 months, a baby averages 5 hours of sleep during the day and 10 hours at night, usually with an interruption or two. About 90% of babies this age sleep through the night, meaning 6 to 8 hours in a row.

But it's important to recognize that babies aren't always awake when they *sound* like they are; they can cry and make all sorts of other noises during light sleep. Even if they do wake up in the night, they may only be awake for a few minutes before falling asleep again on their own. It's best if babies learn early to get themselves to sleep, so let your baby try.

If a baby under 6 months old continues to cry for several minutes, it's time to respond. Your baby may be genuinely uncomfortable: hungry, wet, cold, or even sick. But routine nighttime awakenings for changing and feeding should be as quick and quiet as possible. Don't provide any unnecessary stimulation, such as talking, playing, or turning on the lights. Encourage the idea that nighttime is for sleeping. You have to teach this because your baby doesn't care what time it is as long as his or her needs are met.

Ideally, your baby should be placed in the crib before falling asleep. And it's not too early to establish a simple bedtime routine. Any soothing activities, performed consistently and in the same order each night, can make up the routine. Your baby will associate these with sleeping, and they'll help him or her wind down. You want your child to fall asleep independently, and a routine encourages babies to go back to sleep if they should wake up in the middle of the night.

Do Not Disturb



6 to 12 Months

At 6 months, an infant may nap about 3 hours during the day and sleep about 11 hours at night. At this age, you can begin to change your response to an infant who awakens and cries during the night.

You can give babies at this age 5 minutes to settle down on their own and go back to sleep. If they don't, you can comfort them without picking them up (talk softly, rub their backs), then leave unless they appear to be sick. Sick babies need to be picked up and comforted. If your baby doesn't seem sick and continues to cry, you can wait a little longer than 5 minutes, then repeat the short crib-side visit.

After several days, your baby should find it easier to get back to sleep on his or her own. But if your 6-month-old continues to wake up five or six times each night, talk to your doctor.

Between 6 and 12 months, separation anxiety becomes a major issue for some babies and may cause them to start waking up again. But the rules for nighttime awakenings are the same through a baby's first birthday: **Don't** pick up your baby, turn on the lights, sing, talk, play, or feed your child. All of these activities encourage repeat behavior.

If your baby wakes up crying at night, you can check in to make sure he or she isn't sick or in need of a diaper change. You can pat your child lovingly on the back or belly. Using a pacifier or thumb sucking can also help children of this age learn to calm and reassure themselves. If your baby continues to cry, you can institute the 5-minute visit pattern.

Establishing a Bedtime Routine

Here's a summary of a few ways that may help your child ease into a good night's sleep:

- Include a winding-down period in the routine.
- Stick to a bedtime, alerting your child both half an hour and 10 minutes beforehand.
- Allow your child to choose which pajamas to wear, stuffed animal to take to bed, etc.
- Consider playing soft, soothing music.
- **Don't** give your baby or toddler a bottle (of breast milk, formula, or any sugar-containing drink) to aid sleep. This can cause a serious dental problem called "baby bottle tooth decay" because the fluids tend to pool in the child's mouth.
- Tuck your child into bed snugly for a feeling of security.

There isn't one sure way to raise a good sleeper, but every parent should be encouraged to know that most kids have the ability to sleep well. The key is to try, from early on, to establish healthy sleep habits.

Taken in Part from:

Dowshen, Steven. "All About Sleep." *Your Kid's Sleep*. November 2007. Kids Health. 27 May 2008 <<http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sleep/sleep.html>>.



Infant Massage

Infant Massage is a great way to calm baby down and to establish a routine. Infant massage also encourages cognitive development, motor development, language development, and bonding with parents. According to the International Association of Infant Massage, "Parents often report that their babies seem to be more relaxed following a massage. Some babies may sleep longer and more deeply."

To begin, you will need infant massage oil or baby lotion, a towel or blanket to lay the baby on, and a change of clothes to put the baby in after the massage. The massage can last as long as you and your baby wish. Remember to relax yourself before hand because the baby will feel if you are tense and she will not be able to relax. After laying the child on her back, begin the massage with the feet and work your way up to the neck and face.

One way to use infant massage is to help set up routine, which will become important to helping baby sleep through the night. Try to do the massage as part of the bedtime routine. This will help the child know that it is bed time and it will relax her just in time to fall asleep. It also gives you a special time with your child and helps you bond with her. Please contact Welcome Baby if you are interested in receiving more detailed instruction on the different strokes in infant massage.



Reference

The International Association of Infant Massage Instructors. "Nurturing Touch: Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage"



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ★ **•Ready to Learn**—Aug. 19th at The Utah County Health Dept., Rm. 1601 from 12-1 p.m. Bring your children and learn about the fun ways you can make reading, math, and science enjoyable for your young ones. Receive a complimentary book, & remember to RSVP at 422-1807.
- ★ **• Car Seat Safety Class**— Classes will be held at the Utah County Health Department July 7th @ 10am, Rm. 2601, and July 22nd @4:30pm, Rm. 2601.
- ★ **• Spanish Ready to Learn**— August 12, at The Utah County Health Department, Rm. 2501, from 5:30–7:00 p.m. Topic: "Play".
- ★ **• Explore the Born Learning Trail-** there are seven throughout Utah County . For location of Born Learning Trails please visit: www.unitedwayuc.org/welcomebaby
- ★ **• Provo City Library-** "Book Babies" every Friday from 10-10:30 a.m. for infants 0-12 mos. "Mother Goose Time" every Friday from 11-12pm for 1 year olds. Age appropriate songs, stories, and activities for baby and their parents/caregivers. *For more info:* <http://www.provo.lib.ut.us> (Go to "Programs & Events"—Calendars—Children's Calendars)

