

7 Sleep Tips



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Sleep Tip #1- How to set up their sleep environment



The first thing you want to do is set up your baby's/child's **sleep environment**. This will promote healthy sleep.

What does that look like?

You want to make the room they are sleeping in as **dark** as possible. This means that during the day it should be as dark in their room as it would be at 2am.

Why?

- promotes melatonin production (sleep hormone)
- helps your baby/child distinguish day from night and associate daylight with being awake and darkness with sleep
- if your baby wakes up after their sleep cycle ends and it's dark, this will help them fall back to sleep and connect their sleep cycles
- no mobiles above their cribs
- no bright lights/night light in their room
- the idea is you don't want any light in the room as it will distract your baby/child and either keep them from falling asleep or it will keep them from connecting their sleep cycles
- to help make their room darker you can purchase black out curtains, use garbage bags or even cardboard



Sleep Tip #1- How to set up their sleep environment (cont)



Invest in a **sound machine** or you can get an **app** on your phone that plays static noise all night long.

You want to make sure that you set your sound machine/phone to play all night long and the entire length of your baby's/child's nap.

This will ensure that if your baby/child wakes up to the same sound they fall asleep to, they won't have a full wake up. It also helps block out transient noises.

Use a sound that is consistently the same for example heart beat, rain, river flowing. It's the same sound repeating over and over.

You want to make sure that it isn't placed near your baby's head as their ears are sensitive. You want to place it as far away from their head as possible. Preferably across the room.

Set the machine to about **50db**.



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Sleep Tip #1- How to set up their sleep environment (cont)



You want to set the **thermostat** to between **20-22C**.

You don't want it too warm or too cold because that will keep them from falling asleep or staying asleep.

Remember they are like adults but only smaller. Think about how hard it is for you to fall asleep if it's too warm in your room. The same can be said for babies and children.

During the summer to help keep their room cool, close the blinds and leave the window open.

If you have an air conditioner or a fan make sure it's not blowing directly onto your baby/child.



Sleep Tip #2- Establish a bedtime routine



Once your baby is about 5 weeks old, you can start establishing a **bedtime routine**. This will teach them to start making associations with bedtime and help them fall asleep easier.

It's never too late to start a bedtime routine. So if you have a toddler that is having difficulties falling asleep at night, a bedtime routine is a great way to help them sleep.

Start:

- **bath/wipe** down your baby every night. This will help them make an association to bedtime and help them sleep better
- **massage** (add a few drops of lavender oil to a carrier oil like coconut or avocado oil). This helps decrease their stress hormone and helps increase melatonin (sleep hormone)
- **pj's**
- **story/song**
- **sleep sack/swaddle**

You want the entire bedtime routine to take about **30 mins**.



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Sleep Tip #3- Introduce a lovie



Once your baby is around 3 months old or can safely roll over, **introducing a lovie** is a great tool to help them sleep and stay asleep.

You want to make sure that they can roll over so that they have the arm strength to push the lovie/stuffy off of them.

A lovie can be anything soft with no small parts that they can choke on.

The idea behind a lovie is that it is a surrogate you, so that when he/she falls asleep or wakes up in the middle of the night/nap, they find it, smell it and they fall right back to sleep.

The best time to introduce a lovie is when they are feeding either breast/bottle. Rub it on your chest so it smells like you and then when they are feeding, put it right beside them. Keep repeating that.

Naming it is also a great way for your baby/child to grow an attachment to it. The idea is that it goes everywhere they go.

I strongly recommend purchasing more than one in case it gets lost.



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Sleep Tip #4- Effective feeds



Whether your baby is breastfeeding/bottlefeeding, you want to ensure that they have **effective feeds**.

This means:

- actively sucking
- they are completely awake

If they start to flutter suck or you see their eyes closing, give your breast a squeeze. If they continue to actively suck great, otherwise burp them and offer the other side. If they don't want the other side, take them off the breast

You don't want them to fall asleep at the breast even for 5 mins, as it will affect their nap/bedtime. They will wake up from their little 5 mins cat nap refreshed and ready to go, making a nap/bedtime more challenging.

You also want to ensure that they are having **effective feeds** to prevent them from using your breast as a **sleep prop** (helping them fall asleep and stay asleep)

We want to teach them to use your breast/bottle to feed and not to put themselves to sleep.



Sleep Tip #5- Timing of feeds



The timing of your feeds is really important as it will affect how well your baby/child will sleep.

The idea is that you want to get **2 feeds** in your baby before their nap/bedtime. The second feed is a way to fill up their tank so that they sleep better.

For babies under 3 months you want to feed them right before you put them down for their nap/bedtime to help keep their tummies full longer.

- for example, your baby wakes up feed them, then play, feed them again, then to sleep.

For babies older than 3 months, you want to feed them 30 mins before their nap and at the beginning of their bedtime routine to prevent them from developing a feed-sleep association.

- for example, your baby/child wakes up feed them, then play, feed them again, play and then sleep.



Sleep Tip #6- Sleep cues



- it is your baby's/child's way to let you know that they are tired
- it can vary from:
 - rubbing their eyes
 - yawning
 - not following an activity
 - glazed look in their eyes
 - irritable
 - eyes are red
- crying is **not** considered a sleep cue. It is considered past the point of no return
- once you see your baby/child exhibiting a sleep cue, it is your cue to put them down
- being aware of their sleep cues will help guide you to know when is the best time to put them down for naps and bedtime
- it can take a few days to figure out what your baby's/child's sleep cue is but once you do, it will help you know their sweet spot
 - you don't want them overtired and you don't want them undertired.



Sleep Tip #7- Awake times



Just like it's important to know what your baby's/child's sleep cues are, it's important to keep an eye on how much awake time they have.

The table below breaks down approximately how much awake time your baby/child should have based on their age.

Age	Awake Times
Birth to 10 weeks	45-60 mins
11 weeks to 3.5 months	1.5-2 hrs
3.5-5 months	2-2.5 hrs
5-7 months	2.5-3 hrs
8-13 months	3-4 hrs
14 months-3 years	5-6 hrs

Knowing their sleep cues and how much awake time they should have will help you with naps and with bedtime.

It will make it easier to figure out their sweet spot of being tired enough but not overtired.



Review



Mamas, I hope you find these tips helpful. Teaching your baby/child to sleep can be challenging. Remember it's a process and consistency will help a lot.

It will teach them:

- to know what to expect
- to build an association with sleep
- how to have effective feeds
 - use the breast/bottle to feed **not** as a sleep prop

It will help you know what:

- their sleep cues are
- appropriate awake time for their age
- how to set up their sleep environment to help facilitate sleep

Just like with anything else in life, we have to teach our children everything. Sleep is no different.

If you need extra support, I am here to help 

