



CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH ASSOCIATES, LTD  
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## Sleep Training

Like adults, children go through several sleep cycles during the night and therefore, several natural periods of waking. The purpose of sleep training is to help your baby learn to soothe themselves to sleep at bedtime and back to sleep after these awakenings without needing “crutches” such as feeding, rocking, patting, music or replacing the pacifier.

There are two important points to keep in mind before you begin:

- Sleep training is rarely “easy” regardless of which method you use. In order to be successful, both parents must be committed to the process when you decide to start. You and your partner will need to encourage and support each other and so it is vital that you are on the same page.
- Most babies do not demonstrate daily improvements – they do not read the book and know what they are “supposed” to do. So there may be nights where there is just as much crying or waking up as the night before or they will have a night or two that is worse than the previous night or there will be no improvement for many nights in a row and then, all of a sudden, one night they will “get it” and sleep through the night.

Therefore, decide when the timing is right for your family and then pick a plan and be consistent in the implementation.

**All** sleep training methods share some basic tenets:

- Create a predictable and calm bed-time routine
- Extinguish undesirable sleep associations such as feeding, rocking, patting, music, or frequent replacing of the pacifier
- Establish desirable sleep associations such as white noise and a safe soft toy (or “lovey”)
- Practice placing your child in the crib drowsy but awake
- Many babies are big enough to sleep train at 4 months old and nearly all by 6 months – around 15 lbs. The younger babies may require a nighttime feed for a few more weeks.
- Most experts feel that day time sleep (naps) can not become organized until good nighttime sleep has been established.
- These methods can be used for older children as well

**The first 3 methods are commonly referred to as “Cry It Out” (CIO). They involve some amount of crying with more (Ferber, Kulich) or less (Weissbluth) parental intervention.**

### **Ferber**

Dr. Richard Ferber, *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems*:

At bedtime or naptime, leave the child in bed and leave the room.

Return at progressively increasing intervals to comfort the baby (without picking him or her up). This may start with coming in every 3 min, then every 5 min, then every 10 minutes.

Each subsequent night, return at intervals longer than the night before. For example, on the second night return every five minutes, then after 10 minutes, and then after 12 minutes until the baby is asleep.



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This method may take 2-3 weeks to work.

### **Kulich**

Dr. Edward Kulich, *The Best Baby **Sleep** Book: The Revolutionary guide to getting your baby to **sleep** through the night.*

Recommends creating positive sleep associations but discusses that the nighttime feeds are easier to extinguish than being rocked to sleep.

Therefore, if your baby won't calm without being fed then feed her in the crib and burp her while sitting in the crib- easiest if the baby is swaddled.

Over time, you can decrease the volume of the feeds until the baby does not wake for them.

This method can take 1-3 weeks to work depending on amount of intervention and speed of weaning the volume of feeds

### **Weissbluth**

Dr. Marc Weissbluth, *Healthy Sleep Habits, Healthy Child:*

Babies need to learn to self soothe.

The best way for them is to learn to not rely on being fed, picked up, rocked or talked to after being put to bed for the night.

This can involve crying off and on through the night for a few days. Let your baby cry for as long as she needs to. For some babies this can be 2 hours or more! The method asserts that if you go to your baby after any length of crying, it is just teaching him that if he cries longer and longer and you will come in. This is known as intermittent reinforcement and the crying becomes even harder to extinguish

Babies should be allowed to cry for 1 hour at naptime. After an hour, pick them up, resume the day and try again at the next nap.

This method may take 1-2 weeks to work.

**There are several popular “no-cry” methods. These methods are more gradual and can take weeks to months to succeed. Of note, several of these methods encourage co-sleeping, however, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages room sharing without bed-sharing to decrease the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Here are the 4 most popular methods:**

**Elizabeth Pantley** *The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night.*

Encourages a more gradual approach customized to your baby's needs and temperament. She recommends rocking and feeding your baby to the point of drowsiness before putting him down – and responding immediately if he cries.



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Parents are urged to keep sleep logs, nap logs, and night-waking logs. Pantley also describes a six-phase process for teaching a child to sleep in a crib.

**Dr. Richard Sears, *The Baby Sleep Book*:**

His methods are often referred to as “attachment parenting” Emphasizes a nurturing, child-centered approach to sleep and warns parents to be wary of “one-size-fits-all” sleep training. He recommends helping your baby learn to sleep in his own time. He encourages co-sleeping, rocking and nursing your baby to sleep, and other forms of physical closeness to create positive sleep associations now and healthy sleep habits down the road.

**Tracy Hogg, RN, *Secrets of the Baby Whisperer*:**

Hogg agrees with Sears that sleep associations should be positive but disagreed with his techniques. She cautions against letting your baby depend on "props" such as nursing, patting, and rocking to get to sleep. Instead, Hogg’s approach calls for going to your baby when he cries, picking him up, and putting him back down as soon as he calms as many times as necessary.

Her technique is considered a middle ground between CIO and no-cry methods.

**This guide is intended to be an overview of the most popular sleep training methods and there are more methods available. Please feel free to discuss any additional sleep training concerns or specific questions with our providers.**