

Top 5 Baby Sleep Lessons



1. **HOW a child falls asleep is of the utmost importance.**

When babies are born, they are not yet developmentally capable of “self-soothing”; they need to be “parented” to sleep. Crying to sleep can create a feeling of distress for the infant, versus going to sleep peacefully, which will create a sense of rightness with their world. As neuro-scientist Carla Shatz put it, “Cells that fire together, wire together.” The more a pathway is used, the easier it becomes to use, so when a child’s early relationships are chronically stressful, he feels stress more quickly as an adult.” Conversely, if he easily and often feels relaxed when going to sleep, this will become second-nature throughout his life. One of the most important things we can teach our children about sleep is that it is a peaceful place to go and a safe place in which to remain!¹

2. **Sleep associations are not a bad thing.**

With babies, we often believe that sleep associations such as nursing to sleep, using a soother or sleeping with a lovey are a “crutch” when, in fact, they are a good thing! These things signal sleep for our babies and help lull them off to a peaceful place. Don’t be afraid of supporting sleep associations for your child; they can even take the pressure of Mom and Dad so you don’t have to work so hard. If you want to change or remove a sleep association at some point down the road, you can certainly do that!²

3. **Sleep is not linear.**

Babies and toddlers experience a variety of ups and downs in their sleep as they go through various developmental milestones. At 3 months they might sleep quite well, and then go through a “regression” at 4-5 months as their stimulus barrier thins. They may sleep well again during a “sweet spot” at 6 months, but have disturbed sleep again when they begin to roll over, crawl or cruise. This up and down trend continues throughout the infant and toddler years as they go through various changes. Having realistic expectations makes these ups and downs so much easier to handle!³

4. **You know your baby best.**

No one has spent more time with your baby than you. You know their likes, dislikes, routine, preferences, temperament and more. You don’t need to read every parenting book or look up every sleep problem on Google. You don’t need to parent the same way your friends or family do. Tap into your inner instincts. What do YOU want to try with your child? What do YOU think will work well for their sleep? Trust your instincts and you’ll get it right.

5. **If you resent it, you can (and should) change it!**

Sometimes as parents, we begin a routine with our baby that works for us at the time. As time goes on, our babies get bigger or perhaps the routine becomes too demanding, yet we stick with it. We don’t have to! Perhaps you no longer want to rock your child to sleep, nurse at night or bounce on a yoga ball to get your child to sleep. Do you want to change the sleeping arrangement or introduce new ways for your child to fall asleep? No problem, let’s change it while supporting our children’s emotions and their healthy relationship with sleep!



Want to better understand your child’s sleep? Want to make some changes? Please contact me for a FREE CALL at intouchsleep@gmail.com or @intouchsleepeducation on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)!

References

¹Wiessinger, D., West, D., Smith, L., Pitman, T., Sweet Sleep. 2014. Chapter 18: Sleep Training Concerns, 2014, p. 311-335.

² Sears. W, *The Baby Sleep Book*, Chapter 1: Five Steps to Get Your Baby to Sleep Better, 2005, p. 13-27.

³ Sears. W, *The Baby Sleep Book*, Chapter 3: The Facts About Infant Sleep and What They Mean for Parents, 2005, p. 57-82.

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