



3-8 months sleep

Time for a routine & more independent sleeping skills

Congratulations: the newborn days are over and your little villager is turning into a “proper baby” 😊

- Neurological changes around sleep are ramping up
- Their circadian rhythm is on its way to be properly set (by 6 months)
- Between 3-6 months the infamous “4 months sleep regression” hits, as they now fully wake between sleep cycles
- Transitioning from 4/3 to 2 naps by the time they are 8 months old
- A lot of parents would like to establish a more predictable routine, now bubs is getting a bit older
- Challenges like cat napping and constant night wakes are more common

Wondering how to support your little one’s sleep through these changes?

Well, if you are looking for more reliable & longer naps and the possibility of more consolidated night sleep for your child & you as the parents, I recommend:

- [Look into your child’s current sleep associations](#) & focus on changing parent-independent ones i.e. from rocking to sleep to rocking to calm, then awake into the cot
- [Teach your child how to independently settle](#) themselves (back) to sleep, so they don’t need your help to connect their sleep cycles/phases
- [Introduce a lovey](#) to your child’s sleep routines for extra comfort
- [Focus on establishing a big lunch nap](#), as 1st nap will shorten quickly i.e. the 3rd nap usually drops by 6-8 months
- [Avoid getting into the trap of feeling](#) stuck at home all day, trying to get your baby to sleep: the shorter morning nap + last nap of the day are great to do on the go/assisted
- [Changing sleep associations](#) aka “sleep training”, is only 1 part of getting on top of sleep challenges (neurologically we can expect babies to learn how to independently self-settle from 16 weeks), we need to “scaffold” your little one’s sleep as part of a holistic approach

How to scaffold your baby's sleep



1) Set up a supportive sleep environment

- **Darkness** to cut out distraction + support melatonin production
- **Temperature** to make sure bubs doesn't wake due to feeling too hot/cold
- **White Noise**: add this familiar & calming sound to their sleep routine + cover external noises that might interfere with their sleep

2) Establish your go to settling strategy

- **Whether its rocking, swinging, patting or feeding to sleep**: for your child to learn more independent sleeping skills they need to understand that they can go awake into their cot and put themselves (back) to sleep
- **Drowsy but awake is SO confusing, right?!** whatever you do to put them to sleep right now, aim to do it until *calm, but awake* & give them the chance to do the last little bit themselves
- **Gradually & consistently** do less and less, until your child can go (back) to sleep without you
- **No one approach fits all**: depending on your child's temperament & your needs an out of the room approach with less hands on might work better
- **Calm & Consistency** will be some of your biggest tools, so your child can co-regulate through you & find comfort in your predictable response
- **Stop. Breath. Listen. Wait**: Sometimes all your baby needs is a bit of space and not every cry means your child needs your help. Crying/grizzling is communication, so let's learn what it means, rather than being scared of it and reverting to shutting it down asap 😊

3) Over vs. Under tiredness

- **Awake times:** between 3-8 months your child will increase their awake time from 90min – 3 hours (up to 4 once 3rd nap has dropped)
- **Over tiredness** builds up cortisol in their bodies, making falling asleep more challenging & can contribute to excessive night wakes & early mornings
- **Under tiredness** can cause a lack of sleep drive & therefore short naps (cat napping), so keep an eye on the time, while looking for your baby's individual tired cues

4) Nutrition & Sleep

- **Full milk feeds**, rather than lots of "snack feeding" to support your baby's main nutritional intake during the day, rather than at night
- **Shift day feeds** from before naps to mainly after naps i.e. for top ups allow enough time before a nap, so your baby doesn't rely on a feed before sleeping
- **Expected night feeds** at this age are 1-2, which can slightly vary depending on whether bubs is breast or formula fed. Any additional feeds are usually either a sign of feeding being a sleep association or day feeds (milk/solids) not being sufficient enough

SOLIDS

- **What and when your baby eats is important** and their journey from a milk based diet to starting solids is an exciting one! It is important to offer your baby a variety of foods that are going to support their body & encourage a good sleep (i.e. iron, magnesium, protein etc.)
- **There are lots of different approaches** around introducing solids & there isn't just "one truth": whatever works for you will be the right one 😊
- **The WHO recommends** 6 months as the ideal age to introduce solids, but many babies show signs of readiness earlier.
- **Solids before 17 weeks** (actual age, not corrected, unless you had a very premature baby) can be quite harmful (too much for their digestive track)
- **Some babies are not really interested in solids until closer to 7/8 months.** Stay calm, this is quite normal, just keep offering and stay relaxed when it comes to meal times. Look into amounts of milk/formula feeds in the day: if you want to increase solids you need to decrease milk

Above all: be kind to yourself & your fellow mums/parents!

Whatever Works. No Judgement. Based on Science.

Your Village

BABY & CHILD SLEEP SUPPORT