



Helping Your Baby Sleep at Night

There are several approaches that can help guide your baby or toddler to sleep better at night. As a parent, it is important to learn about what is safe for your baby and to choose an approach that you are comfortable with and best fits your family. The following information provides parents with 2 options that are safe methods to help a child develop better sleep habits:

1. Controlled Comforting:

This approach involves spending only a short time settling the baby and then leaving him or her to settle alone. The parent responds to crying by “looking in” on the baby, but not taking the baby out of the crib, and intervals for “looking in” on the child are gradually increased.

Controlled comforting involves:

- After following a consistent bedtime routine, the parent places the child in his or her crib.
- The parent then talks to and caresses the baby to help him or her settle.
- As soon as the baby is quiet, or after one minute, the parent should leave the room.
- If the baby starts to cry after the parent has left the room, the parent waits a set amount of time before going in (perhaps 2 minutes at first), then goes to the baby, re-settles the baby by talking and caressing until the baby calms, then leaves the room again.
- Each time the baby cries after the parent leaves the room, the baby is left for increasingly longer periods of time before the parent goes in to resettle the baby.
- This process is continued until the infant falls asleep without intervention
- With controlled comforting, effects are usually obtained quickly, typically between 3 – 14 days.



2. Camping Out:

Camping out is similar to controlled comforting, as the child is left to settle alone and is not removed from the crib or bed when he or she cries. Camping out is a gentler technique to teaching your child to sleep, as the parent remains in the child's room seated on a chair.

Camping Out involves:

- The parent sits on a chair next to the crib, pats or strokes the child until he or she falls asleep
- When the child is used to falling asleep like this (usually after 3 nights), the parent remains on the chair beside the crib until the child falls asleep but no longer strokes or touches the child
- When the child becomes used to this routine (usually after 3 nights), the parent moves the chair a foot away from the crib and stays until the child falls asleep
- After this point, the chair is gradually moved towards the doorway and out of the room – usually over a period of 1 – 3 weeks.
- Camping out takes longer than controlled comforting to work and therefore requires more energy, stamina, and persistence by the parent.

It is very important to establish an appropriate, consistent bedtime routine that happens every night: (bath, feeding, quiet time with cuddles/ music, into bed).

Adapted from Centre for Community Health 2006, Settling and Sleep Problems.
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Recommended Reading for Childhood Sleep problems:

- **The No-cry Sleep Solution**, Elizabeth Pantley, 2002
- **Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems**, Richard Ferber, M.D., 2006
- **The Sleepeasy Solution**, The Exhausted Parent's Guide to Getting Your Child to Sleep, Jennifer Waldberger, Jill Spivack, 2007
- **The Happiest Baby on the Block**, Harvey Karp, 2002