

PHYSIOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT (Module 2)

Lesson 1: The importance of sleep

A lot of parents we talk to feel guilty about wanting to change their child's sleep habits. This is often rooted in the belief that a child will naturally develop sleep patterns that are best for them. Sadly, this is not always the case! Children's sleep patterns and habits are formed both by their physiology and development AND their parent's actions and reactions. In other words, you have just as much, if not more, influence on your child's sleep as "nature" does. So, let's set the guilt aside and focus on all the reasons (and there are many!) why you *should* work on your little one's sleep.

The first reason being that good sleep is imperative to the health of your child! It has been shown that getting restorative sleep:

- ★ strengthens your child's immune system,
- ★ lowers stress levels,
- ★ improves your child's ability to concentrate and learn new information (even later in life!)
- ★ helps prevent obesity, hyperactive behavior, and anxiety long-term,
- ★ and supports a child's emotional regulation and social engagement with peers.

Not only that, but sleep is also important for your emotional and physical well-being. Did you know that parental sleep deprivation has been shown to decrease your reaction speed to the same extent as being under the influence of alcohol, and is actually physically and psychologically dangerous for you and your little one?! Parents getting enough good sleep has been shown to decrease incidences of child abuse and "shaken baby syndrome". What's more well-rested parents have decreased stress and conflict in parental relationships, have a lower probability to suffer from postpartum depression, and generally in better physical health.

Can you see why making sure that you and your little one are well-rested is NOT selfish but actually one of the best things you can do for your family's well-being!?

→ Go to your worksheets now and answer the questions for **Module 2, Lesson 1 - The Importance of Sleep.**