

## DAY ROUTINES (Module 4)

### *Lesson 3: Realistic nap, nighttime and nutrition expectations*

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP ) the technical definition of “sleeping through the night” (STTN) is when a child can do a 6-8 hour stretch of uninterrupted sleep at night, and this is generally only viewed as possible from 3-4 months onward. Before this, in the newborn age, 3-5 hours of consolidated night sleep is counted as STTN. On the other hand, most experts agree that children are capable of sleeping 11-12 hours through the night without any night feeds by their first birthday. All this goes to show that it’s important to have realistic expectations of our children and don’t expect something that they cannot developmentally do yet!

Based on scientific research, complemented by our years of experience working with hundreds of families worldwide, the graph below shows average age-realistic expectations on child night sleep:

**NIGHT FEEDS**  
*over 11-12h of night sleep*

AGE	LONGEST STRETCH OF SLEEP	GOAL NUMBER OF FEEDS
4 months	4-6 h	2-3
5 months	4-8 h	1-2
6 months	6-8 h	1-2
7-8 months	6-8 h	1-2
9-12 months	8-12 h	0-1
> 12 months	11-12h	0

Below you’ll find a video for each age group where we discuss age-appropriate nap, nighttime and nutrition expectations. We’ve also included our suggested day routines for each age group for both the **“short-long-(short)”** and the **“long-long-(short)”**

variations in pdf format below each age-specific video. There's no need for you to look at all the videos for all the age groups. Simply select your child's age range, watch the video and complete the worksheet questions based on that for now. At the end of the module there will be a final worksheet exercise which will help you pull together all the information you've learned in this module to create your child's ideal day routine.

**NOTE:** You may also be interested in reviewing the next age range that's coming up for your child, just to get an idea of what to expect in the coming months. However, don't overwhelm yourself with too much information - just focus on addressing the current situation! You can always come back and review the other age groups another time!

## 4-6 months

### *Naps*

At this age, your baby's circadian rhythm is continuing to develop, and they develop a more predictable day routine, although they may need some encouragement to do so. A baby's awake time between naps increases from approximately 2 hours at 4 months to 2.5 hours at 6 months and the ability to connect their sleep cycles throughout the day develops by 6 months. Some babies will be ok on 4 shorter naps till about 20 weeks of age, but after this they should consolidate to 3 naps over the day, otherwise the short catnapping habit will start to negatively impact their night sleep. Especially after the 4-month sleep regression, it's best to start encouraging longer, more consolidated naps and night sleep, and a good day routine helps with this.

### *Nighttime*

At this age, babies can start to sleep slightly longer stretches at night (5-8 hours) if weight gain is good. They can physically sleep 7-8h straight without a feed once they are 6.5kg and are only sleeping around 3.5-4 hours a day, but it's normal for your baby to still need 1-2 feeds at night until they are well established on solids (3 feeds may be ok for a 4 month old, but try to work towards only 2 night feeds by about 5 months). If you are fine with this and they are quick feeds and straight back to bed then you can leave

this as is for now. Between 4-6 months however, a baby should not need to feed more than 3 times within the 11-12 hours of night sleep. If your baby is waking more frequently than every 3-4 hours, overtiredness and sleep associations are the most likely causes. (Hunger is NOT a cause of hourly waking at this age, provided that there are no feeding issues such as latch difficulties, tongue/lip-tie, milk supply issues, etc).

### ***Nutrition***

Your little one should still be drinking milk approximately every 3 hours throughout the day at this age.

Some babies may show an increased interest in eating solid foods between 4-6 months of age. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends milk only till 6 months of age, so if you decide to start solids earlier, please keep in mind that they are only supplementary at this age and should always follow milk-feeds.

It's important to note that starting solids earlier than recommended won't necessarily help your baby sleep better at night. In fact, in some cases it may have the opposite effect. However, if you do decide to start solids earlier, just keep in mind not to increase the amount of solids too quickly at this age.

Go to your worksheets now and answer the questions for **Module 4. Lesson 3 - Realistic Nighttime Expectations.**

## **6-9 months**

### ***Naps***

At this age, your baby's day rhythm should be relatively predictable and your little one is physiologically capable of settling to sleep without help at this age. Your little one should be getting 3-3.5 hours of sleep over 2-3 naps. Awake times have lengthened slightly to about 2.5 hours, and this may increase even more closer to 7-9 months, as your little one will most likely drop to 2 naps by then. (For more on how to know when

your little one is ready to transition to 2 naps, and how to do it, check out the NAP TRANSITIONS lesson in the TROUBLESHOOTING module).

**Once the third nap has been dropped, we recommend the “2.5 - 3 - 4 hour” day routine as follows:**

- *2.5 hours awake time from morning wake-up to morning nap start*
- *3 hours awake time from morning nap end to midday nap start*
- *4 hours awake time from the end of midday nap till bedtime*

### ***Nighttime***

Babies can physically sleep from 11 pm-6/7 am once they are 6.5kg, and are only sleeping around 3.5-4 hours a day, but mentally babies often will wake for a second feed in the night well past 6.5kg. If you are fine with this and it is a quick feed and straight back to bed then you don't have a problem.

Babies at this age can start to do 6-10 hour stretches of sleep at night between feeds, and maximum 1-2 milk feeds are needed throughout the night. However, a lot of breastfed babies will not drop the second feed (usually around 2/3/4 am) until they are well established on solids. If your baby is having 2 quick feeds in 12 hours overnight and settles easily after the feeds you may find it less stressful to simply wait until you've introduced the second solid feed during the day and then attempt to drop the second milk feed of the night.

### ***Nutrition***

From 6 months onwards, breast-milk is no longer sufficient to meet the nutritional needs of your baby, and you should introduce solids. This being said, solids should not be replacing milk feeds yet - solids are still complementary or additional to milk feeds. That means that your little one will still need at least 4-6 milk feeds over the day, and most likely 1-2 at night. (For examples on how to healthily balance milk and solids intake you can check out our recommended age-appropriate day routine later in this module.)

It is important to introduce foods containing protein and iron into your baby's diet from 6/7 months onward (e.g. red-meat, liver, egg-yolk, lentils & chickpeas). That being said, protein can be hard to digest and may disturb sleep, so avoid high-protein foods at dinnertime.

For more information on how to introduce solids, baby-led weaning vs. purees, and other commonly asked questions on nutrition check out the NUTRITION section in the FAQ module.

Go to your worksheets now and answer the questions for **Module 4, Lesson 3 - Realistic Nighttime Expectations.**

## 9-12 months

### *Naps*

At this age your baby will most likely be settled into a 2-nap day routine, with slightly longer awake times. Your little one will still need 2.5-3 hours of day sleep, over 2 naps. At this age it's increasingly important to focus on the midday nap being the longest nap of the day, as a long nap in the morning with only a short catnap in the afternoon can lead to overtiredness and frequent night wakings, because of an unbalanced distribution of sleep over the day. Awake times range from 2.5-4 hours across the day.

**NOTE: Once the third nap has fully dropped, we recommend the "2.5 - 3 - 4 hour" day routine as follows:**

- 2.5 hours awake time from morning wake-up to morning nap start
- 3 hours awake time from morning nap end to midday nap start
- 4 hours awake time from midday nap end to bedtime

At this age the 9-month sleep regression or other motoric developments may disturb sleep. For more information on how to respond to this, check out the Troubleshooting module.

## ***Nighttime***

By 9 months of age, the majority of calories should be consumed during the day, with a maximum of 1 night feed, if any. Babies are physically capable of sleeping 11-12 hours through the night once they weigh 7-8kg, and are eating 2 good-sized portions of solids (each ca. 180g) during the day. This means that most babies are ready to start sleeping through the night sometime between 9-12 months.

## ***Nutrition***

From 9 months of age, begin giving your baby solids before milk feeds. This encourages them to eat more solids and slowly make the transition to making solid food their primary source of nutrients. This is where solid foods begin to replace milk feeds, and the overall milk intake of the day begins to slowly decrease. Keep in mind that too many night feeds at this age can also dampen your child's appetite for solids during the day. At this age, 3-4 milk feeds during the day and 1 (if any) at night is an appropriate expectation. (For examples on how to healthily balance milk and solids intake you can check out our recommended age-appropriate day routines further along in this module).

It is important to ensure that your child is eating enough food containing protein and iron at this age (e.g. red-meat, liver, egg-yolk, lentils & chickpeas). However, protein can be hard to digest and may disturb sleep, so avoid high-protein foods at dinnertime.

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## **12-15 months**

### ***Naps***

Between the age of 12-15 months, your toddler needs about 2.5 hours of day sleep over 2 naps, and 11-12 hours of sleep per night. Some babies will fight naps at this age (see more on the 12-month sleep regression in the TROUBLESHOOTING module) but usually dropping to one nap too early will create a cycle of overtiredness, and cause night sleep

to fall apart. The awake time is usually around 3-4 hours at this age, and bedtime may move temporarily later, before the transition to 1 nap between 15-18 months. Keep in mind the 4hr maximum awake time in the afternoon before bedtime to avoid overtiredness.

### ***Nighttime***

Most children are ready to sleep through the night with no night feeds by 12 months of age - night waking after this age is usually not related to hunger, but to a sleep association or issue with the sleep environment or day routine. Milk-feeds in the night after this age tend to disrupt sleep cycles and cause loss of appetite for solids during the day. (Not to mention that the milk sugars are damaging to your child's beautiful pearly white baby teeth, and even to the adult teeth under the gums, if not brushed after each feed!).

If you feel that your child often gets thirsty in the night, you can try putting a spill-proof sippy cup of water in their bed with them, so that they can help themselves in the night. NOTE: if you are wanting to work towards early potty training OR your child guzzles a lot of water in order to fall asleep OR if your child begins to play with the sippy cup, this may not work for your child.

### ***Nutrition***

From 1 year onwards, solids should be your toddlers main source of nutrition, and your toddler will most likely be eating with you from the table. We suggest offering 3 main meals a day with snacks in between. Ensure that your child isn't getting more than 500ml / 2 cups of milk products (including milk, cheese, yoghurt and breastmilk) a day, as this can begin to negatively impact how hungry your little one is for other foods. For example, a small bottle/cup of milk after breakfast and a bigger one in the evening should suffice for your child's daily milk intake. If you are still breastfeeding, 2 nursing feeds a day is probably sufficient. A great way to encourage eating solids is to offer these feeds straight after breakfast and 30 minutes before bedtime. If your child is still

breastfeeding on demand and you plan to continue nursing long-term, please reference the section on Nutrition in the FAQ module.

Pediatricians and pediatric dentists often recommend that babies should break the bottle habit at 12 months — and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends complete weaning from the bottle by 15 months at the latest. That means that milk feeds at this age are best given in a cup or sippy cup. Keep in mind that your child's teeth need to be brushed before bed after any milk feeds (including breastfeeding).

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## **15-18 months**

### ***Naps***

Between 15-18 months your little one will most likely drop to one nap (check out the NAP TRANSITIONS section of the TROUBLESHOOTING module). They still need 2-2.5 hours of daytime sleep during this time, however. Keep in mind the 4.5-5hr maximum awake time in the afternoon before bedtime to avoid overtiredness.

### ***Nighttime***

Most children are ready to sleep through the night with no night feeds by 12 months of age - night waking after this age usually is not related to hunger, but to a sleep association or issue with the sleep environment or day routine. Milk-feeds in the night after this age tend to disrupt sleep cycles and cause loss of appetite for solids during the day. (Not to mention that the milk sugars are damaging to your child's beautiful pearly white baby teeth, and even to the adult teeth under the gums, if not brushed after each feed!)

If you feel that your child often gets thirsty in the night, you can try putting a spill-proof sippy cup of water in their bed with them, so that they can help themselves in the night.



NOTE: if you are wanting to work towards early potty training OR your child guzzles a lot of water in order to fall asleep OR if your child begins to play with the sippy cup, this may not work for your child.

### ***Nutrition***

Solids are now your toddlers' main source of nutrition, and your toddler will most likely be eating with you from the table. We suggest offering 3 main meals a day with snacks in between. Ensure that your child is not getting more than 500ml / 2 cups of milk products (this includes milk, cheese, yogurt, and breastmilk) a day, as this will negatively impact how hungry your little one is for other foods. If your child is still breastfeeding on demand and you plan to continue nursing long-term, please reference the section on Nutrition in the FAQ module.

Pediatricians and pediatric dentists often recommend that babies should break the bottle habit at 12 months — and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends complete weaning from the bottle by 15 months at the latest. That means that milk feeds at this age are best given in a cup or sippy cup. Keep in mind that your child's teeth need to be brushed before bed after any milk feeds (including breastfeeding).

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### **18-24 months**

#### ***Naps***

At this age your toddler should be solidly on one 2-hr midday nap per day, with awake times of approximately 5 hours either side. The 18 month or 24 month sleep regression may disturb sleep in general. You can read more about this in the Troubleshooting module.

## ***Nighttime***

Night waking at this age usually is not related to hunger, but to a sleep association or issue with the sleep environment or day routine. Milk-feeds in the night after this age tend to disrupt sleep cycles and cause loss of appetite for solids during the day. (Not to mention that the milk sugars are damaging to your child's beautiful pearly white baby teeth, and even to the adult teeth under the gums, if not brushed after each feed!) Difficulty falling asleep in the evening or night-fears may emerge closer to 2 years (if you think your child is experiencing night-fears, check out more information on this in the TROUBLESHOOTING module).

If you feel that your child often gets thirsty in the night, you can try putting a spill-proof sippy cup of water in their bed with them, so that they can help themselves in the night. NOTE: if you are wanting to work towards early potty training OR your child guzzles a lot of water in order to fall asleep OR if your child begins to play with the sippy cup, this may not work for your child.

## ***Nutrition***

Solids are now your toddlers' main source of nutrition, and your toddler will most likely be eating with you from the table. We suggest offering 3 main meals a day with snacks in between. Your little one can now have milk products as part of their normal food intake, rather than separate milk feeds during the day. Keep in mind that your child shouldn't be getting more than 500ml / 2 cups of milk products (this includes milk, cheese, yogurt, and breastmilk) a day, as this can begin to negatively impact how hungry your little one is for other foods.

Pediatricians and pediatric dentists often recommend that babies should break the bottle habit at 12 months — and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends complete weaning from the bottle by 15 months at the latest. So if your child is still drinking out of a bottle, we recommend you wean it away immediately, and replace it with a sippy cup.

If you are not working towards potty training, some warm milk given in a cup 20-30 minutes before bed can help your child feel sleepy, however, keep in mind that your child's teeth need to be brushed after any milk feeds (including breastfeeding) before bed.

Go to your worksheets now and answer the questions for **Module 4, Lesson 3 - Realistic Nighttime Expectations.**