

SLEEP TRAINING PROCESS (Module 8)

Lesson 3: Getting started with your settling method

In this lesson, we will walk you through how to implement your settling method throughout the sleep training process. We have developed our own guidelines for the process through years of individual coaching work with hundreds of families, trying to find ways to make the transition easiest on both the child and the parents.

Now, let's look at the first 3 days of sleep training.

Phase 1: Days 1-3

The main focus of the first 3 days is changing how your little one falls asleep at nap-time and bedtime with the help of your chosen settling method. If you haven't done it already, make sure that your child's sleep environment is optimized and that you're following their age-appropriate day routine structure keeping the awake windows and biological sleep windows in mind. Don't worry about trying to extend the naps or actively weaning any night feeds for the first 3 days. although we do suggest that if your little one wakes too early in the morning, you implement your settling method until as close as possible to your desired wake up time. The main focus for the beginning is to help your little one learn to fall asleep with less assistance from you. The naps and night sleep may improve naturally as a result!

The very first time you implement your settling method should be in the evening, because even though it may be hard for your little one to fall asleep without their usual assistance, the sleep pressure built up over the day will make sleep imminent. The next day, begin implementing your chosen settling method at the beginning of the naps that your child does in bed.

*****If your child is currently feeding to sleep or just before sleep,** we recommend that you slowly bring the feeding time 5-10 minutes earlier each day over the first 3 days

of sleep training so that eventually the feed finishes 20-30 minutes before you begin to settle your child to sleep for a nap or the night using your chosen settling method. (If your child is over 18 months, you may want to wean off the bedtime milk-feed altogether. For more information on how to do this, check out the “Bottle-feeding and Breast-feeding” section in the FAQ module.)

For some little ones the gradual method of moving the feed earlier will be too slow and frustrating, even confusing. If you see that by moving the feed gradually, there’s already a lot of crying when settling to sleep, move the feeding time straight to 20-30 minutes before bedtime on the next day.

Here are some other things that may be helpful in disconnecting feeding/sucking and sleep:

- Feed in a different room rather than in the bedroom
- If nursing, only feed while sitting up, rather than laying down
- Don’t feed your child on your bed, or let your little one have a bottle in the crib. Feeding and sleeping locations should be separate.
- After feeding, let your child play on the floor for 10-15 minutes

Choose the options that fit your child.

Phase 2: Day 4 and beyond

From at least day 4 onwards, you should implement your settling method consistently...

- at the beginning of both the morning and midday nap
- at bedtime
- when your baby wakes more than 30 minutes before the desired morning wake-up time
- when your baby wakes too early from the midday nap
- when your baby wakes in the night and it’s not time to feed

In the next lessons, we will go over these and other common sleep issues in detail, and give you actionable steps on how to respond to them during sleep training. It may also be helpful to check out the tips on adjusting settling methods in the next lesson before starting sleep training, in order to create the most suitable plan for you and your child.