

SLEEP TRAINING PROCESS (Module 8)

Lesson 5: Sleep training for naps, bedtime and nights, and early mornings

Lesson 5.1 - Naps

Where should my little one sleep for naps during the sleep training process?

If your child has been taking their naps in a stroller or carrier so far, we suggest that from day 1 on sleep training, you start settling your baby to sleep in their bed for at least the midday/lunch nap. Depending on how many naps your child still takes, you could leave the first and/or third nap in the stroller or carrier. Doing at least one nap a day in bed gives your little one the opportunity to practice connecting their sleep cycles, and encourages them to do that in the night as well. Be mindful, however, that if your child's main sleep association is movement (falling asleep in a moving stroller, in the carrier or being rocked to sleep), keeping too many naps in the stroller/carrier may make it harder for your little one to get used to falling asleep without movement.

If catnapping is currently an issue regardless of where your child sleeps, conduct both morning and midday naps indoors from the beginning for at least the 1st week, so that they get as much practice as possible.

We suggest that you leave the 3rd nap (if still needed) in the stroller/carrier, as this is generally the hardest nap to achieve, but without it, your little one will get overtired by bedtime. However, if your child has never slept in a stroller or carrier or struggles to fall asleep in one, there's no point in starting to attempt a stroller or carrier nap now.

If you want to keep the midday nap in the stroller long-term, remember that...

- this is only possible if your child sleeps in a stationary stroller (without movement)

- you should still give your child at least one nap per day indoors, so that they can practice sleeping in their bed, and stay flexible. This will also ease their transition into daycare.

Implementing the settling method at naptime

At naptime, implement your settling method for a maximum of 40 minutes. If after 40 minutes your little one still has not yet fallen asleep, cheerfully open the curtains, and get them out of their bed, as you normally would after a nap. Then proceed as follows, depending on the age of your child.

If your child is between 5-8 months: take them into another room (e.g. living room), calm them fully down (if still upset), and then give them a feed. Make sure NOT to allow them to fall asleep during this feed! This is extremely important, as even just falling asleep for a couple of minutes on the breast or bottle can act as intermittent reinforcement and make the following naps and bedtime that much more difficult for both of you. After the feed, have a short playtime (10-15 minutes), and then try a second nap attempt in bed in their darkened room, implementing your settling method again for up to 40 minutes. It is most likely that they will fall asleep this second time. Adjust the rest of the day routine according to when this nap actually took place using the age-appropriate awake times to plan the next nap (if applicable) and/or bedtime.

If your child is between 9-24 months: do not do a second nap attempt, but instead, move the start of the next anticipated naptime (or bedtime) slightly earlier to keep your schedule and curb overtiredness. If you feed your child shortly after the nap attempt, make sure to fully calm them down first, and make sure your child doesn't fall asleep during the feed, as this will act as intermittent reinforcement.

Extending short naps

Remember, you don't need to actively work on extending catnaps during the first 3 days of sleep training. The naps may even start to improve on their own, as you address the sleep associations! If you can see that naps already start to improve within the first 3

days on their own, you can wait with any active nap extension process for another 3 days. However, if on day 3 of sleep training your little one is still catnapping and you haven't seen any improvement, you probably need to start working on extending the naps on day 4, using the following steps.

Step 1: When your baby wakes up too early from the midday nap, wait at least 5-10 minutes before going in. If they just talk or fuss in bed, give them more time. However, if they are still crying after the wait period, go in and use your chosen method a further 30-45 minutes to encourage them to go back to sleep.

Step 2A: If your little one falls asleep again, it's ok to allow them to sleep past the planned nap wake-up time from the recommended schedule. However, you may still need to wake them before they've gotten the full nap length of sleep, in order to maintain the overall balance of the day's sleep.

If your little one takes 30-45 minutes to fall back to sleep after that first wake up, get them up at the next waking (regardless of how long they slept) OR wake them up once they've slept 2h in total (including the sleep they got before the nap extension). Adjust the next nap or bedtime accordingly.

If the nap involves a lot of resettling, and ends before the planned wake up time, move the next nap or bedtime slightly earlier (using the lower end of your child's age-appropriate awake time) to avoid overtiredness.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Your 5-month old baby's midday nap is supposed to be 2 hours long, from 12:15-2:15pm. Let's say it takes her till 12:25pm to fall asleep, and then she wakes after 35 minutes at 1:00pm. Here, you would first wait until 1:05pm before going in. Let's say she's been crying this whole time. Then you go in and implement your settling method for up to 45 minutes. In this case, let's assume she fell asleep at 1:35pm. You would then let her sleep until she naturally wakes up or until 3pm, once they've gotten 2h of sleep in total. In this case the third nap would need to move slightly later (starting at around 4:45pm) and be slightly*

shorter (max 30min) so that bedtime doesn't get pushed too late. Alternatively, if the baby were to wake closer to 2:15pm after resettling at 1:35pm, you could then follow a 2h awake time after the nap and adjust the timing for the third nap and bedtime accordingly.

STEP 2B: If your child doesn't fall back asleep, you would open up the curtains and do a calm and happy wake up after a max of 45 minutes of resettling. Move the third nap and/or bedtime to be earlier.

Even if your little one doesn't fall back asleep within the 30-45 minutes of implementing your settling method, don't worry, this is not a failure but a learning time and does still help in the long-run. The dark room and limited social interaction helps to encourage the body to do a longer nap the following day.

If the nap involves a lot of resettling, and ends before the planned wake up time, move the next nap or bedtime slightly earlier (using the lower end of your child's age-appropriate awake time) to avoid overtiredness.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Say your 5-month old wakes up after just 1:00pm as in the previous example and you have resettled until 1:50pm, but she still hasn't fallen asleep, you would then get her up from her nap and move her third nap to be at 3:30pm. Let's say she does her third nap from 3:45-4:30pm, bedtime would need to be brought earlier to about 6:30pm to avoid overtiredness.*

Extending naps can take 1-2 weeks, so be patient and don't give up if you don't see results immediately. However, if your little one hasn't been able to sleep longer or fall back asleep during the extension in 7 days, we suggest you look over their entire day schedule and sleep plan to make sure that there isn't something else that needs to be adjusted first. We also encourage you to attend one of the group coaching sessions in this case, so that we can take a look at the situation together.

Lesson 5.2 - Bedtime & during the night

As we said earlier, in the first 3 days of sleep training, you should first concentrate on encouraging independent settling at bedtime and nap times, and optimizing the day routine and sleep environment. At bedtime, implement your chosen settling method until your child has fallen asleep, regardless of how much time has passed. With these changes, your baby may even stop waking frequently in the night and naturally drop night feeds! With some children, though, you need to actively wean night feeds.

If your little one is being fed more frequently in the night than is necessary for their age, we suggest that you reduce night feedings using one of the suggested methods below. Take a look at your workbook notes from Module 4, where you developed your realistic nighttime sleep expectations plan.

If your child is already not getting any nighttime feeds at this point, but is still waking frequently to be settled, stay consistent with your settling method at every wake up in the night, and the frequent wake-ups will resolve quickly. **Be sure to address any other sleep associations that might also be preventing your child from connecting their sleep cycles independently (such as your presence in the room), and avoid overtiredness.**

Be sure to refer back to Module 6, Lesson 3 on "Hidden Sleep Associations", as well as the next lesson here in Module 8 on "Common issues and how to solve them during sleep training" for ideas of potential underlying reasons for the frequent night waking.

Methods for dropping night feeds:

Night-Weaning Method #1: Gradually increase the time interval between feeds and resettle using your chosen settling method

We suggest you firstly choose a reasonable and age-appropriate length of time that you feel your child can handle without a feed and gradually work towards that over several days. We don't want to overwhelm your little one but we also want them to start

learning to connect sleep cycles in the night. We know that biologically even newborns can go 3-4 hours in the night without feeding, so that's a very reasonable place to start!

- **If your child is 4-6 months old** you can choose 3 hours as the starting point, especially if your child is currently waking every 1-2 hours, but this needs to be extended to 4-6 hours over a week.
- **If your child is between 6-12 months**, we recommend starting with a 4 hour interval between night feeds, gradually extending to your desired interval, depending on their age, over 1-2 weeks.
- **If your child is older than 12 months**, you can go down to offering just one feed from the very beginning, and gradually wean that last feed over a week.

Whenever your child wakes up before the interval has passed, settle your child until they have fallen asleep. If mom is nursing, letting the other parent handle all interventions for the wake-ups in between feeds can be really helpful! Babies can smell the milk, and will often be more frustrated when mom comes in, but doesn't feed them, which can make re-settling difficult.

***TIP:** If your child has cried the entire time, you've reached the feeding time and your child is showing no signs of calming down, try to calm them down in your arms first for a few minutes and then give them the feed. In general this technique should be used as a last resort, as letting your child cry for a long period of time and then offering a feed may actually encourage even more crying, and prolong the sleep training process!*

***FOR EXAMPLE:** Your 6 month old is used to waking at 11pm, 1am, 3am and 5am for night-time feeds. Knowing that your baby can do at least a 4 hour interval between feeds, you would not feed them before 10:30pm (based on a 6:30pm last feed), and then again 4 hours after that first feed (depending on when that feed actually took place). Whenever your baby wakes in between those intervals, you implement your settling method until they fall asleep again.*

So let's say they wake up the first time at 9pm - you would resettle here. They then wake up at 11pm, and you'd feed at this point. They next wake up at 1am, and you resettle to sleep, feeding only at 3:30am when they wake next. They then sleep from here till 7am.

Extend the interval between feeds to 5-6 hours over the course of a week. You may be surprised that your little one might even drop to 1 feed on their own!

Night-weaning Method #2: Gradually decrease length of feed (for breastfed babies)

For 2-3 days track how long your baby drinks for each feed in the night. Then, gradually decrease the length of feeding time for ONE or TWO feeds (if there are currently more than two night feeds) in increments of 2-3 minutes, until you're down to just a 2 minute feed. At this point, you drop your chosen feeds completely, and resettle your baby with your chosen settling method instead.

If the feeds are different lengths, we suggest you start by reducing the feed that is usually the shortest. Alternatively, you can have a look at this graph for the age-appropriate length of time a baby can go in the night between feeds, and see which of your current feeds are most closely aligned with those intervals. Then, start gradually decreasing the feeds that fall outside those ideal times first.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Your 6 month old is used to waking at 11pm, 1am, 3am and 5am for night-time feeds. Knowing that your little one can do at least 4 hour intervals between feeds, you would focus on dropping the 1am and/or the 5am feed first. Let's say you choose the 1am feed. If your usual feeding time length is say 20 minutes, you decrease the length of feeding by 2 minutes every day, until you're down to just a 2 minute feed on day 9. On day 10, you drop this feed completely, and resettle your baby with your chosen settling method instead. Then, you would begin to wean either the 3am or 5am feed next, in the same way. Once your baby is successfully doing 2 night feeds, you would then make sure to extend the time between those feeds if needed (potentially using Night Weaning Method #1), so that your baby does the age-appropriate interval of 6-8 hours between feeds.*

Night-Weaning Method #3: Gradually decrease amount of formula

Gradually decrease the amount of formula you give for the ONE feed that you want to drop, either by decreasing the total amount of milk by 30 ml every 2-3 days, or decrease the amount of powder by one scoop every 2-3 days to the same amount of water. Do this until you're only giving 30ml/1 scoop of formula. The next night drop this feed and instead settle your child back to sleep using your settling method.

You might find your child refusing watered down milk, in which case you can either drop the feed right then, or switch to reducing the amount of milk instead of watering it down.

If your child is already drinking less milk during one feed than during others, that's a great place to start.

***FOR EXAMPLE:** Let's say you usually feed your 8-month-old baby at 11pm and 2am, offering 120ml of formula at both feeds. He regularly finishes the 11pm bottle, but only drinks 90ml at 2am, so the logical place to start weaning would be the 2am feed. On day one, you would drop this feed down to 90ml, because that's what he usually drinks.*

***If you choose the "decrease entire amount of milk" method.** you could reduce the amount of milk down to 60ml on day 2 and then to 30ml on day 4. On day 5 you would settle your baby without a feed at this wake-up.*

***If you choose the "dilute the milk" method.** you could reduce the powder down to 2 scoops (equivalent to 60ml of milk) mixed with 90ml of water on day 2, then down to 1 scoop of formula with 90ml water on day 4. On day 5, you would then settle him without a feed, or only offer water at this wake-up.*

Night-Weaning Method #4: Drop night-feeds cold-turkey

If your little one is older than 1 year old, it may be easiest just to drop all night feeds cold-turkey, and resettle them with your chosen settling method whenever they wake in the night. If you are still worried about them being thirsty in the night, but don't want to

be offering milk-feeds anymore, a spill-proof sippy cup of water in the crib can be a good alternative. The important factor here is that the child can find and use the sippy cup on their own in the night, and also, that the sippy cup of water is not used by your child to settle to sleep (sucking to sleep). If you are working towards early potty-training, it may be best to offer your child a sip of water before bed, but not give them a sippy cup in bed.

FOR EXAMPLE: *Let's assume you usually feed your 14-month-old toddler a bottle at 11pm and 5am. From day 1, you would respond to any and all night wakings with your chosen settling method, and persist until your little one falls asleep again.*

Lesson 5.3 - Early morning waking

Ensuring your child has a balanced and age-appropriate day routine is the first thing to work on in order to encourage a later morning wake-up, along with weaning any sleep associations. However, early morning waking is usually one of the hardest issues to resolve, and can take up to 2-4 weeks to improve. Because the early morning is the lightest sleep of the whole night, and your baby has already slept for quite a while, it may be very difficult for them to fall back to sleep if they wake during this time.

If your little one wakes up just slightly too early (within half an hour of the desired wake-up time) and doesn't fall back to sleep, simply move the morning nap slightly earlier by 10-15 minutes.

If your little one wakes 30 minutes or more before your desired wake-up time, treat this as a night-wake up, and respond with your settling method. Keep your child in their bed as close to the desired wake-up time as possible. Keeping them in a dark bedroom, with limited social interaction will encourage a later morning wake-up in the following days. If they do fall asleep, let them sleep until your desired wake-up time (or up to 30 minutes past your desired wake-up time if your goal is to gradually move to a later schedule altogether).

If your child woke up especially early (45 minutes or more before desired wake up time) and didn't fall back asleep, you would need to adjust their day depending on their age. If your little one is 4-8 months old, try a bridging nap. If they are 9 months or over, adjust their morning nap (or lunch nap, if they have already dropped their morning nap) to be 15-30 minutes earlier.

FOR EXAMPLE: You want to establish a 7am-7pm schedule, so your desired wake-up time is 7am. Say your child wakes up at 5:45, you would then wait for 5 minutes to give them some space to re-settle on their own and then start applying your chosen settling method. You would follow your method for as long as possible. We would recommend until at least 6:30am. Once you reach this time, you can either continue for another 15-30 minutes, if your child is quite calm in their bed, or do their morning wake up. Let's say your child did fall back asleep at 6:20. You would then let them sleep until 7am and wake them up to start your day.

Bridging naps

A bridging nap is a very short, 10-15 minute nap that happens around the time of the desired morning wake-up time in order to help bridge the gap between her actual wake-up time and the first regular nap, without reinforcing the early wake up by moving the whole schedule earlier. The bridging nap works best for babies aged 4-8 months.

DOs and DON'Ts of bridging naps:

- **DO start the bridging nap around the desired morning wake-up time** (e.g. if your aim is 7am wake-up, do the bridging nap between 7-7:30am.) If baby doesn't fall asleep by 7:30am, forget the bridging nap, and bring the morning nap slightly forward so that your baby doesn't get too overtired.
- **DO keep your child awake for an age appropriate minimum wake window after the bridging nap** (approx. 1h45min at 4-5 months, 2h at 6-8 months). From here, let your baby start their normal day routine with the morning nap.

- **DO let your baby do the bridging nap in the baby carrier or stroller**, as they aren't completely tired enough for a nap at this time, and may find it harder than usual to settle. If your baby doesn't usually fall asleep easily in the stroller or carrier, you can try settling in bed with your chosen settling method for about 15 minutes.
- **DON'T let your baby sleep longer than 10-15 minutes maximum for a bridging nap**, as otherwise this will reinforce the early morning wake-up for the next day.
- **DON'T use nursing/feeding to sleep for a bridging nap**, as you are most likely weaning this association away and this could be confusing for your little one.
- **DON'T do the bridging nap too close to the morning naptime**, as this will make settling for the morning nap difficult, and potentially cause the whole day's naps to fall out of rhythm.
- **DON'T implement bridging naps more than 3-5 days in a row**. They should be used as an occasional intervention to keep your little one's day rhythm on track, NOT become the new normal.

FOR EXAMPLE: Your 5 month old baby wakes at 6am, 1 hour before the desired wake up time of 7am. You attempt to resettle her to sleep till 6:45am, but she doesn't fall back to sleep. Get your baby up, feed her and then put her in the carrier at 7:15am for a 10-15 minute bridging nap. Waking her up at 7:30am helps her still be tired enough at 9:15am to fall asleep for her morning naptime, and helps the rest of the day stay in rhythm.

If your little one's early morning waking does not improve after 3-5 days of using a bridging nap, it probably isn't the best solution for your child. In this case, try to push your child toward the desired morning nap time as much as possible, in order to correct the early waking.

If you have implemented those changes for 2-3 weeks without an improvement, you may however need to make some changes to the start time of the first nap, as below.

Start time of the first nap

The start time of the first nap of the day plays a big role in setting your child's wake up time in the morning. So, if your child begins to regularly wake up too early in the morning, it may be time to gradually push the starting point of the first nap slightly later. See your child's age-appropriate day routine for our suggested nap-times!

If you have done all of the above, but nothing seems to be working, register for one of the upcoming group coaching sessions to see what else we can do to encourage a later start to your day.