



What is Your Child's Sleep Pattern?



We may sleep at the same time each day or at very different times. Together we can make bedtime work for both of us.

Figuring It Out Together

To understand your child's sleep pattern, think about the following:



Notice your baby's early rhythms around sleeping and waking.

Does he find it easy to sleep but not so easy to wake up? Does he fall asleep but often wake up crying 20 minutes later? Does he seem full of sunshine and ready to go in the morning? Does he need a quiet and calm morning in order to wake up and have a good start to his day?



Talk to your baby about sleeping and waking.

Help him begin to become aware of behaviors that are associated with feeling sleepy and waking up. For example, as you lay Allie (5 months) in his crib for a nap, you might say, "Allie, you've done so many things this morning! I can hear you telling me you are tired by how you wanted to snuggle and sway while I sang to you. Rest a bit and we will enjoy more things when you wake up. Papa (Mama) is near."



Keep the routines simple.

Routines let everyone know what to expect, which is calming. A simple place to start may be to read or tell a story, say prayers or reflections, sing a song, snuggle and say "Sweet Dreams - I love you."



Practice positive thoughts.

Choose words that keep things in a positive light – even in the middle of the night. You are more likely to respond with more patience and thought if you say, "We sure have different sleep patterns, which can be tough" instead of "my baby is a bad sleeper" or "if he doesn't start sleeping more than 20 minutes at a time, I'm going to lose my mind."



0-4 months: Learning the Difference Between Night and Day



I've spent the last 9 months in a cozy, dark place sleeping whenever I want. No wonder I get night and day mixed up.

Figuring It Out Together

Here are some ways to help your baby understand how life works in your family: people sleep at night and spend time together in the day. You can do this by changing your space and deciding how and when you play with him:



Let him know that daytime is for being with you and playing:

- Limit naps to 3 hours starting at 2 weeks old. Stretch out the time between naps. Try to get some rest yourself when he is dozing.
- Keep him up. Play, talk, and sing together when he is awake and alert.
- Make your space light and bright.
- No need to hush. Let the phone ring, dishwasher whirr, or door buzz.



At night, make it easier for him to fall asleep:

- Keep the lights low and noise down as you feed him and change him - even in the middle of the night.
- Limit talking and playing. He'll start to get the idea it is time for sleep.
- Rock or sway him gently in your arms.
- Give him something to suck - but not his bottle. Bottles are for eating, which is awake time with you.
- Swaddle him or wrap him in a cozy sleep sack.
- Play a continuous sound, such as white noise.
- Gently massage his tiny arms and legs.



Other ideas you want to try?
