

Night and Day: Helping your Baby to Know the Difference

PART 1: THE FIRST SIX WEEKS: INTRODUCING A PLAN OF CARE

DAY-TIME

1. Feed your baby as often as he/she wishes.
2. When baby wakes, look at and talk to him/her; smile. Make the time after the feed a pleasurable 'social' event. Take your time and enjoy each other's company.
3. Take your baby out for a walk- or better still, encourage your partner, relative or close friend to do this while you rest.
4. On the days that you bath your baby, try to ensure that this happens at approximately the same time. This will help your baby to associate certain time of the day with familiar routines.
5. Take the time to offer your baby cuddles, play, love and attention.

NIGHT-TIME

1. Put your baby into his/her night clothes (baby-gro, nightdress etc.).
2. After feeding, if baby is still awake, try not to hold, rock or nurse him/her to sleep. Put your baby in the cot while awake, and leave him/her to settle. The light levels should be dim at night – not dark necessarily, but not too bright either.
3. If your baby doesn't settle check on the following:
 - a. Check his/her nappy- does it need changing?
 - b. Try winding him/her.
 - c. Is baby too hot or cold? Add or remove clothing accordingly.
 - d. Stroke and talk softly to your baby. If needs be, pick him/her up and have a cuddle.

Give each action a chance to work before trying something else- at least 10 minutes.

4. Try to distinguish between 'crying' and 'fretting' in order to reduce the number of times you pick your baby up. Babies often fret before settling to sleep but do not always need further attention.
5. When your baby wakes in the night for a feed, try to keep the light as low as safety allows. Respond to your baby's physical needs, nappy change, feed and settle back to bed. If baby doesn't settle, work through suggestions in 3 above.
6. Avoid playing, 'socialising' as much as possible.
7. If your baby is waking more than three-to-four hourly at night, it will not always be necessary to go through the ritual of nappy changing, unless the need is obvious.
8. Make night-time uninteresting for your baby: minimal interaction and stimulation.
Night time is for sleeping!



PART 2: WEEK 6- 12 OF THE PLAN OF CARE

The second part of the programme can be introduced when your baby is about six weeks of age, as long as he/she is thriving and your Health visitor and GP has not concerns about his/her wellbeing.

DAY-TIME

During the day-time, keep to the same methods as in the first month. Make day-time an interesting time to be awake.

NIGHT-TIME

It is now time to begin to lengthen the time between night-time feeds.

This does **not** mean leaving your baby to cry unattended for long periods. To break the association between waking and feeding, the aim is to delay feeding for a short time when you baby wakes at night. For instance, use changing nappy, resettling back in the cot, patting, carrying, and talking to delay giving a feed.

This will need to be done gradually-perhaps just 5 minutes of delay at first. After a week or two, the gaps between night-time feeds should become noticeably longer and your baby will start to sleep for longer periods at night.

This method should not reduce the amount of breast milk or formula that your baby takes over 24 hours. Instead, he/she will probably take a bigger feed first thing in the morning and increase other feeds during the day. After a while, your baby will learn to increase the feed in the late evening to help to sleep through the night.

The introduction of this care plan is **not** designed to alter the length of time your baby sleeps during a 24 hour period. Instead it should encourage him/her to take more sleep and sleep for longer

Remember: be gentle but consistent. We hope this approach will allow you and your baby to enjoy the time you spend together.

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