

Back to Sleep

A Lesson on Sleep

Playgroup #6

Materials Needed

- You will need a crib for the activity
- You will need a simple 12 inch ruler for the activity

Handouts

- Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play
- Crib Safety Tips

Introduction

Have a discussion regarding your children and their sleep habits. Discuss whether your children are sleeping through the night and ways you have been successful in helping them sleep through the night. What about naps, how many and how often?

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the importance of sleep and know how much your child should be getting
- Know what SIDS is and how to reduce the risk for your child
- Know some ways to help your child get in the habit of sleeping through the night
- Know how to check if your crib is safe for your child

Facts about Sleep

Infants have two sleep states, Deep or Quiet Sleep and Active or REM sleep. Both are important for the infant's sleep cycle. They will spend most of their time in Active sleep and will spend the rest in a Deep sleep which is the calmest state an infant can be in.

During the first year babies may awaken during the night, but most of them can usually put themselves back to sleep. A baby can learn to calm themselves if you put them to bed while they are still awake. Every once in a while the baby might fall asleep in your arms. Try and place them in bed while they are still awake. This will prevent them from depending on your assistance to fall asleep, whether through rocking or cuddling.

It is helpful to slow down the infant's activities after about 4:00 p.m. this can be difficult if Dad comes home late and wants to play with the baby. But babies can become overstimulated and then it can be very difficult to get them to sleep, even though they may be exhausted. Try to establish some kind of bedtime routine. Baths in the evening or a gentle infant massage are great routines to try. As the child becomes older, a bedtime story is nice for the end of the day. An early bedtime is also beneficial because it promotes longer sleep and better naps. Try to put them to sleep between 6-8 p.m. If you wait until they are overtired then they will have difficulty falling asleep.

After about six months when your baby no longer needs night time feedings, they should not be awakened at night unless a medical provider has suggested otherwise. Although babies may seem fussy or wake up crying at times, try not to pick them up. Crying is their way of communicating and

at night time it may be their way of protesting. Do not pick them up unless you feel like there is something wrong.

Avoid putting your baby to sleep with a bottle. This can cause tooth decay. Always hold your baby to feed them and avoid propping the bottle. Avoid putting the bottle in the crib for them to feed themselves during the night.

If they don't get a good night's sleep, the daytime can be difficult and the baby may be grumpy and excitable. A child that is sleeping well is calm, alert, and ready to enjoy the environment. She is ready to learn and learn in the way children learn best: through play.

How much should my baby be sleeping?

One of the most frustrating things about being a new parent is trying to figure out a sleep schedule for your baby. The answers vary with each baby and with each age. Here are a few suggestions for helping your child sleep happy and healthy.

Newborns: Sleep about 16-17 hours a day. This sleep is mainly spread out throughout the day in about 3-4 hour increments. Babies will sometimes awake twice in the night to be fed.

One to Three Months: At this age babies sleep at 4-10 hour intervals and take frequent naps. They usually have more awake periods during the day and night sleeps become longer.

Four to Eight Months: Around this time your baby probably sleeps around 10-12 hours at night. They will also take two or three naps a day that last anywhere from 1-4 hours. Around six months they should no longer need to be awakened for a night feeding. If they do wake up it is more likely from being uncomfortable than being hungry.

One Year: By now your baby should be sleeping about 13-14 hours in a 24 hour period of time. The majority of your baby's sleep time should be during the night, and by now about 11-12 hours. On average she may be taking one nap a day lasting 1-3 hours in length.

One to Two Years: Most toddlers this age will have pretty regular sleep habits and be used to the idea of going to bed at night. It is around this time that they also lose their morning nap.

Two to Four Years: By this time the children are extremely active and awake for the majority of the day. In fact, the afternoon nap is less common and less necessary so don't be surprised if they don't need a nap at this age.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

SIDS is the sudden, unexplained death of an infant younger than one year old. It is the leading cause of death in children between one month and one year of age. Most SIDS

deaths happen when babies are between 2 months and 4 months of age. Unfortunately, not much is known about what exactly causes the syndrome, but health care professionals do know certain practices can help reduce the risk of SIDS.

Chrissy Cianflone, Safe Kids program manager says, “The phrase ‘back to sleep’ has saved hundreds of lives. Within 10 years after public health professionals started teaching new parents to lay a baby on his or her back to sleep, the death rate from SIDS was cut in half.” Most infant suffocation (60 percent) happens in a crib or bed. Babies can suffocate when their faces become wedged against or buried in a mattress, pillow, infant cushion or other soft bedding or when someone in the same bed rolls over onto them.

“It’s tempting to hold your baby in bed with you, but think very carefully about the latest sleeping guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP],” says Cianflone. “It’s risky to share a bed or sofa with a baby, especially if you’re tired, you’ve been drinking alcohol or you’re taking medication.” The AAP announced findings in 2005 concluding that the safest place for a baby to sleep is in the same room as a parent, but in a separate crib near the parent’s bed. Sleeping with a baby on a sofa or chair is especially discouraged.

Recommendation to Reduce the Risk of SIDS

Always place babies on their backs to sleep – Babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their stomachs or sides. Placing your baby on his or her back to sleep is the number one way to reduce the risk of SIDS. Even during naps, it is important for babies to sleep on their backs EVERYTIME.

Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as a safety-approved crib mattress covered with a fitted sheet - Never place a baby to sleep on a pillow, quilt, sheepskin, or other soft surface.

Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby’s sleep area – Don’t use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, or pillow-like bumpers in your baby’s sleep area. Keep all items away from the baby’s face; even better keep them completely out of their sleeping area.

Avoid letting your baby overheat during sleep – Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. The baby should not be bundled in too much clothing or heavy blankets.

Use a clean, dry pacifier when placing your baby down to sleep, but don’t force the baby to take it. If you’re breastfeeding, wait until your child is 1 month old, or is used to breastfeeding before using a pacifier.

Breastfeed for as long as possible – Upper respiratory infections are believed to contribute to SIDS, and research suggests breastfeeding will help build your baby’s immunity to illness. Also be sure to have your baby immunized.

Never allow anyone to smoke around your baby – Infants whose parents smoked during pregnancy are at a much higher risk of dying from SIDS. If someone smokes in the house now, your baby has two to three times the risk of dying from SIDS. Even exposure to secondhand smoke outside the home increases your child’s risk.

Sleeping Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these precautions for babies who cannot yet turn themselves over (*generally, babies less than six months old*):

- “It’s worth repeating: lay your baby *back* to sleep,” says Cianflone. “The single most powerful step you can take to reduce the risk of SIDS is to make sure babies under six months always sleep on their backs, facing up, on a firm surface without soft objects around.”
- When infants are napping or sleeping they should **ONLY** be placed in cribs approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Mattresses should **ALWAYS** fit snugly into the crib’s frame. Cribs made after 1982 and sold in the United States by a retailer should, by law, meet the CPSC safety standards for cribs.
- Dress your infant in a sleeper or warm pajama instead of covering infant with a blanket. If you choose to use a blanket they should always be tucked under the mattress so they do not reach above the baby’s chest; do not use adult-sized blankets.
- Parents or caregivers who want to be close to their infant while they are sleeping can move the crib, bassinet, or co-sleeper next to their bed.
- Crib bumpers are not necessary, but if used, they should be firm, thin and securely tied to the crib.
- Do not rely on any consumer products or medical devices to prevent SIDS. No such product has been shown to be effective, and some have not been shown to be safe.
- Infants should **ALWAYS** be placed on a firm surface or mattress.
- If you do not have a crib, your infant can be placed to sleep on another safe, firm sleep surface such as a bassinet, cradle, or co-sleeper that does not have any soft or fluffy items on its sleep surface.
- **NEVER** place your infant on a sofa, couch, pillow, or waterbed.
- **NEVER** place your infant to sleep or to nap with any pillows, stuffed toys, bumper pads, comforters, quilts, or sheepskin.
- **NEVER** smoke in the same room as an infant or child.
- **NEVER** let anybody else smoke in the same room as your infant or child.
- To prevent the baby’s head from developing a flat spot in back, allow plenty of “tummy time” for the baby while awake and constantly supervised. Don’t leave a baby in a carrier or bouncer all day. Infants should be placed on their tummies (tummy time) **ONLY** when they are awake and supervised by someone responsible. Supervised tummy time is encouraged to help make your infant’s neck and back muscles strong.

Sleeping Through the Night

There are two main approaches if your baby cries at bed time or during the night. One is to let the baby cry themselves to sleep. This can be difficult for new parents to listen to their baby cry, but be reassured that it won't last forever and the next night the time spent crying will be less. In about three to five days they probably will not cry at all.

Some parents may prefer to go into the room after five minutes to reassure themselves that the baby is okay. Do not pick them up. You can place your hand on them for comfort, but do not speak or play with the baby. Just silently reassure them that you are there and then leave the room. You may need to repeat this until they fall asleep, but increase the length of time you wait after each time you go back in. For instance five minutes the first time, then ten minutes, then fifteen minutes and so on. It is best not to turn on the light and make a lot of noise.

Activity

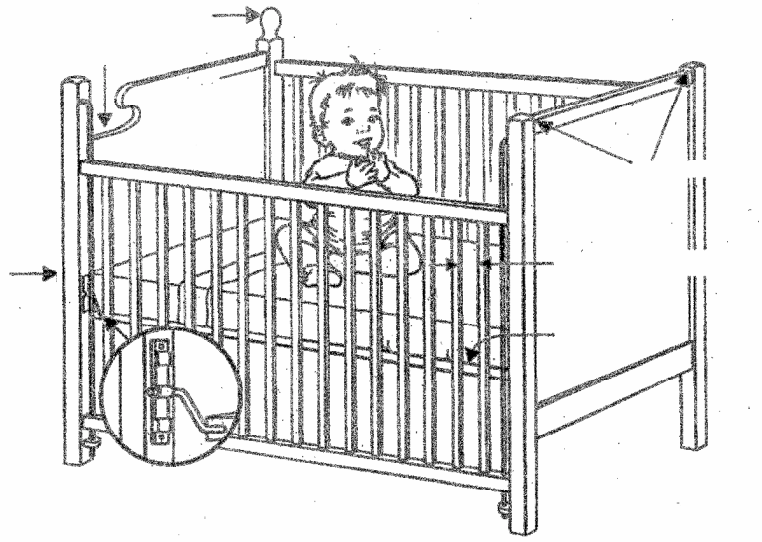
For this activity you will need to take a little field trip to the host families crib. Together go over the crib checklist put out by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission – this is one of the handouts for all the mothers. Examine the crib closely, and be sure to go over all the measurements that are stated on the check list. Go over the image below, fill in the blanks and discuss which features are safe and which are not. Encourage all the mothers to complete a crib check when they get home to make sure their crib is safe for their child.

Wooden or metal cribs – check to see that:

- Crib has not been recalled (up-to-date recall lists are available on the Web at www.cpsc.gov).
- Slats are 2 3/8 inches (60 mm) apart or less.
- Slats are not missing, loose, cracked or splintered.
- Crib has no sharp or jagged edges.
- Mattress fits tightly into crib (i.e., no more than two fingers fit between the edges of the mattress and the crib side).
- Mattress support is securely attached to the crib headboard and footboard.
- Screws or bolts holding crib parts together are tight and none are missing.
- Corner posts are 1/16 inch (1 1/2 mm) high or less.
- Crib has no cutouts in the crib headboard or footboard.
- Drop-side latches are too difficult to be released by a young child.
- Mattress is covered with a well-fitting crib sheet (never use adult sheets).
- No pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft items are in the crib.

Crib Safety Ruler

A few measurements are critical in assuring a safe crib environment. First, the spaces between crib slats should not be wider than $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches. If the spacing is wider, infants—whose heads are typically larger than their bodies—may strangle when their body slips between the slats but their head gets caught. Corner posts or finials are strangulation hazards because children’s clothing can catch on them. They should never be more than $\frac{1}{16}$ inch high.



Suggested Reading

Dr. Seuss’s Sleep Book
By Dr. Seuss

The Napping House
By Audrey Wood

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, www.nichd.nih.gov

National Institute of Health, www.nih.gov

American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org

Safe Kids Worldwide, www.usa.safekids.org

Utah County Health Department, <http://www.co.utah.ut.us/dept/health/>

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, <http://www.cpsc.gov>.