

TIP SHEET

Response Based Sleep & Settling for Infants & Toddlers

Safe^{SSS}
Sleep
Space

How quickly they grow! Up until now we have been counting life in terms of days and weeks, now we see huge changes as your baby grows and develops amazing abilities. Do you know what your baby looks like when they are tired, not overtired but just getting tired? Some babies show tired signs better than others.

Tired signs to watch for; *grizzly, jerky movements, brief moments of unfocused staring, pale face, and some babies can become quite active, even overactive and some just cry.*

Have a close look, because it is when your baby is showing tired signs then this is the time to prepare for sleep. Babies (actually everyone) drift to sleep with greater ease if they are not overtired. Don't be fooled by the myth that if you let them get really, really tired they sleep longer. They don't, in fact they often have a more restless sleep and wake up grumpy.

A wonderful thing to do with your baby at this age is to watch them. Watch them looking at you, their parent. They learn from you, little by little for example for social cues. Watch what your baby does when you meet someone new. See how your baby looks to you for clues, to see if this unfamiliar person is okay to be around, if you interact happily with this person, your baby will be able to sustain eye contact with them and may even share a smile. Babies are socially growing and governed by your responses. If your baby is unsure they will snuggle in close to you, for safety and security.

You will see your baby develop interests in discovering life with a new independence, so create safe and interesting environments your baby can explore. This is also an important time to share moments where you are just 'being with' your baby, not leading the play, not being distracted by your phone, just togetherness; it is critical. Alert babies can become easily overwhelmed so offer one thing at a time; meal time then play time, play time then quiet time.

Around this age more predictable sleep patterns emerge because the circadian rhythm becomes more influential, this is especially noticeable overnight. Research shows that waking overnight at this age is perfectly normal but sleep episodes become longer.

Around 7 months babies begin to develop a sense of not wanting to be separated from their parents and may find separate sleeping a challenge. Be kind when at sleep times;

- create predictable patterns before sleeps, including quiet time and cuddles
- if your baby is unable to calm in their cot, offer a sense of "I am here to help you calm," so your baby can trust they will not have to be alone when distressed
- sleep associations can be powerful; a darkened room, sleeping bag and quiet background sounds accompanying preparation for sleep can give a clear message it is sleep time

- If your baby is waking and cries out overnight, offer a feed if you think they are hungry. If not, offer comforting in their cot briefly so they learn you will offer comforting for a brief time and if still they cannot calm, this is when a cuddle is needed. By first offering comforting in the cot, your baby learns when they wake, that you will come to comfort them and the distress is replaced by your baby waking and just returning to sleep.

If you think your baby is hungry overnight, consider offering a dream feed. This means you offer a feed before your baby wakes around 10.30pm, just lift them quietly and offer the feed; no lights, no nappy change, no talking, no fuss and quietly back to bed. A quiet, sleepy feed like this may sustain them longer overnight.

At Safe Sleep Space we offer a range of services; phone consultations, home visits and day stay programs. We also have resources; ROCKABUB app, 0-12 months sleep DVD, toddler sleep DVD and the Safe Sleep Space book & eBook, none of which involve controlled crying. For more information go to; www.safesleepspace.com.au or call us on 1300 775 337

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