

Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child

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- The process of falling asleep and staying asleep is learned behavior that occurs naturally.
- Difficulty in learning occurs when parents do not respect and protect the child's natural, periodic need to sleep.

Natural vs. Unnatural

“Natural”

- All babies have spells of fussing and crying
- These spells distress all parents.
- All parents want to soothe their baby.
- The more the baby fusses or cries, the less he/she sleeps.
- The less the baby sleeps, the less the parents sleep.
- The less the parents sleep, the harder it is for them to soothe their baby.
- Relatives and friends want to help soothe the baby and are expected to assist parents.
- Breast-feeding and sleeping with your baby are powerful ways to soothe your baby.

“Unnatural”

- Urban stimulation (noises, voices, delivery trucks, shopping trips, errands) may interfere with baby's sleeping.
- Day care - (not being able to put your child to sleep when just starting to become tired, or too much stimulation) may interfere with baby's sleeping
- Social isolation - forcing only the mother to be wholly responsible to take care of soothing and sleeping may cause intense stress for the mother.
- Busy modern lifestyles - means that parents have many things to do and little time to do them; sometimes they have to take their baby with them even at sleep times.
- Mothers have to work outside the house - miss playing with their baby, and keep their baby up too late at night.
- Fathers or mothers have a long commute - and return home from work late, want to play with baby, and keep baby up too late at night.
- Grandparents - interfere with sleep routines.

Five Fundamental Principles of Sleep

1. The sleeping brain is not a resting brain.
 2. The sleeping brain functions in a different manner than the waking brain.
 3. The activity and work of the sleeping brain are purposeful.
 4. The process of falling asleep is learned.
 5. Providing the growing brain with sufficient sleep is necessary for developing the ability to concentrate and an easier temperament.
- Sleep is the power source that keeps your mind alert and calm. Sleeping well increases brainpower just as lifting weights builds stronger muscles, because Sleeping well increases your attention span and allows you to be physically relaxed and mentally alert at the same time.

- The importance of optimal wakefulness cannot be overemphasized. If your child does not get all the sleep he/she needs, the child will seem either drowsy or hyper alert.
- If either state lasts for a long time the results are the same: a child with difficult mood, hard to control behavior, easily distracted, unable to concentrate, inattentive, easily distracted.