

Sleep Bud Sleep



A COMPLETE GUIDE

The Gentle Sleep Guide

*Everything you need to nurture sweet sleep —
from newborn to toddler, the gentle way.*



Hello, sweet parent.

If you're reading this, chances are you're a little tired, a little hopeful, and looking for a kinder way forward. I see you, and I'm so glad you're here.

This guide brings together everything I share with the families I work with — the foundations of gentle sleep, age-appropriate rhythms, calming environments, and routines that actually work. No crying it out. No rigid rules. Just warm, evidence-based guidance that respects you and your baby.

Take what serves you, leave what doesn't, and remember — sleep is a journey, not a switch. You're already doing beautifully.

With love,
Monica

PEDIATRIC SLEEP COACH



Sleep by stage: newborn to toddler

Your little one's sleep needs change beautifully as they grow. Here's a gentle overview of what to expect at each stage — and how to support it without forcing.

NEWBORN • 0–3 MONTHS



The fourth trimester

14–17 hours total sleep across the day and night. Sleep is light, frequent, and unpredictable — and that's exactly how it should be. Focus on warmth, closeness, full feeds, and recreating the womb. No schedule needed yet.

INFANT • 4–12 MONTHS



Finding their rhythm

12–15 hours total, with night sleep consolidating into longer stretches. Naps settle into a more predictable pattern (3 → 2 → 2 naps). This is the sweet window for gentle routines, calm wind-downs, and laying healthy sleep foundations.

TODDLER • 1–4 YEARS



Big feelings, big changes

11–14 hours total, transitioning from 2 naps to 1, then eventually dropping the nap entirely (usually 3–4 years). Expect big emotions, separation peaks, and bedtime resistance. Gentle limits, predictability, and connection are everything here.

Monica's tip 💡

These ranges are gentle guides, not rules. Your baby is a whole little person, not an average. If sleep totals are slightly off but they're happy, growing, and content — you're doing wonderfully.

Wake windows & nap rhythms

A wake window is the time your baby can comfortably stay awake between sleeps — including feeds, play, and the wind-down. The right window helps them fall asleep with less fuss and stay asleep longer.

AGE	WAKE WINDOW	NAPS / DAY	TOTAL SLEEP
0–6 weeks	45–60 minutes	4–6 (flexible)	14–17 hours
6–12 weeks	60–90 minutes	4–5	14–16 hours
3–6 months	1.5–2.5 hours	3–4	13–15 hours
6–9 months	2.5–3 hours	3 → 2	13–15 hours
9–12 months	3–4 hours	2	12–14 hours
12–18 months	3.5–5 hours	2 → 1	12–14 hours
18m–3 years	5–6 hours	1	11–14 hours
3–4 years	6+ hours	0–1	10–13 hours

For more detailed, age-by-age wake window breakdowns, head over to my blog ([link in bio](#)).

Monica's tip 💡

Watch your baby, not just the clock. Wake windows are guides — your baby's tired cues (zoning out, eye rubbing, getting clingy) are the real signal. Be responsive, not rigid.

Sleep regressions: what's really going on

Sleep regressions aren't your baby going backwards — they're growing forwards. Brain leaps, new skills, and emotional development can temporarily disrupt sleep. They pass. Stay consistent, stay gentle.

4 MONTHS

The big one. Sleep cycles mature into adult-like patterns. Baby may wake more frequently between cycles. Focus on a calm wind-down and feeding well during the day.

8–10 MO

Object permanence + crawling. Separation anxiety peaks; baby practices new skills in the cot. Extra reassurance and connection time during the day really helps.

12 MONTHS

Walking + nap shift. Often mistaken for the 1 → 2 nap drop. Most babies still need 2 naps until 14–18 months. Hold the routine steady.

18 MONTHS

Independence + language. Toddler may resist bedtime, test limits, or want to do everything themselves. Gentle, firm boundaries with lots of warmth.

2 YEARS

Emotional growth. Big feelings, vivid imagination, sometimes new fears. Connection, comfort, and a predictable routine carry you through.

3 YEARS

Nap drop + new bed. Many toddlers drop the nap and transition to a big bed. Both shifts can ripple into night sleep — go slow, one change at a time.

Monica's tip

Regressions usually last 1–3 weeks. The worst thing we can do is panic and introduce a new sleep prop. Hold your routine steady, offer extra connection by day, and trust that this is temporary.

The sleep environment

Babies sleep best in spaces that are calm, cool, and womb-like. A few small environmental tweaks often make a bigger difference than any technique.

DARK

Aim for blackout-dark for naps and night. Darkness boosts melatonin and helps your baby sleep deeper. Cover stray LEDs.

COOL

Room temperature between **22–26°C** (depending on weather and what baby is wearing). Touch the chest, not the hands, to check warmth.

QUIET (ish)

Use white or brown noise at a steady, low volume — about as loud as a soft shower. Place the machine across the room, not by baby's head.

SAFE

Firm flat mattress, fitted sheet only, nothing else in the cot for under-12-months. Back-to-sleep, every sleep.

What to dress baby in

Layers matter more than brand. The general rule: dress baby in one more layer than you'd be comfortable in.

ROOM TEMP	SUGGESTED LAYERS	SLEEP SACK TOG
27°C +	Short-sleeve bodysuit only	0.2 – 0.5 TOG
24–26°C	Short-sleeve bodysuit	1.0 TOG
20–23°C	Long-sleeve bodysuit / pyjamas	2.5 TOG
Below 20°C	Footed pyjamas + long-sleeve vest	3.5 TOG

The wind-down: your bedtime ritual

A predictable bedtime routine is the most powerful sleep tool you have. It signals to baby's body and brain that sleep is coming — long before their head touches the cot. Aim to begin **30–45 minutes before** your target sleep time.

1

Dim & quieten the home

Lower lights, turn off screens, soften voices. This is the body's first cue that the day is winding down.

2

Warm bath or gentle wash

Optional but lovely. The drop in body temperature after a warm bath helps trigger sleepiness.

3

Massage & pyjamas

Slow, gentle touch with lotion. Then sleep sack or sleep clothes — same order, every night.

4

Feed (if age-appropriate)

For babies still feeding to sleep age, keep this calm and unhurried. For older babies, move the feed earlier in the routine so it isn't the very last step.

5

Story, song & cuddles

One or two short books, a familiar lullaby, your goodnight phrase. Predictability is the magic here.

6

Into the cot or bed, calm and connected

White noise on, room dark, and into the sleep space feeling safe and loved.

Putting baby down: both ways, gently

There is no single "right" sleep space — only the one that feels right and safe for your family. Whether you co-sleep or use a cot, the gentle principles stay the same: warmth, calm, and responsiveness.



Co-sleeping & bedsharing

- ✓ Always follow safe-sleep guidance (Lullaby Trust / Safe Sleep Seven)
- ✓ Firm, flat adult mattress with no gaps, no soft bedding near baby
- ✓ No smoking, no alcohol, no medication that causes drowsiness
- ✓ Baby on back, on their own pillow-free space, with light covers only
- ✓ Feed baby drowsy, place gently beside you, stay close as they settle
- ✓ Bedside cribs are a beautiful middle-ground option



Cot or crib sleeping

- ✓ Firm flat mattress, fitted sheet only — nothing else in the cot
- ✓ Back-to-sleep, in a sleep sack appropriate for the room temperature
- ✓ Begin in the same dark, calm sleep space for naps too, if possible
- ✓ Place baby down calm but awake when they're ready (more on this →)
- ✓ Use a hand on chest, gentle shushing, or your voice to soothe in the cot
- ✓ Stay nearby for as long as your baby — and you — need

Monica's tip

You don't have to choose forever. Many families co-sleep in the early months and gently transition to a cot later — or move between both depending on the night. Be responsive to your baby and yourself.

Towards independent sleep

Independent sleep simply means your baby can fall asleep — and re-settle between sleep cycles — without needing the same prop every time. It isn't about leaving them alone to cry. It's a slow, supported skill they grow into.

When to start

There is no single "right" age. For most babies, the gentlest window to begin laying foundations is around **4–6 months**, once newborn sleep patterns have matured and feeds are well-established. Before then, all the closeness and contact in the world is exactly what your baby needs.

Gentle foundations you can start now

- ✓ A consistent, predictable bedtime routine
- ✓ An optimal sleep environment (dark, cool, white noise)
- ✓ Putting baby down calm but awake whenever you can
- ✓ Pausing briefly before responding to small stirs
- ✓ Offering comfort in the cot before lifting out

What self-settling is *not*

- ✓ Leaving baby to cry alone
- ✓ Ignoring your baby's communication
- ✓ A switch you flip overnight
- ✓ Something every baby learns at the same pace
- ✓ The same as cry-it-out

Ready for the deeper work?

Every baby is wonderfully different — and self-settling is rarely a one-size-fits-all plan. If you're ready for guidance tailored to your baby's age, temperament, and your family's needs, I'd love to help.

Need help? Ready to work with me for better nights?
Come chat with me on direct message.

[@monica.babysleepconsultant](https://www.instagram.com/monica.babysleepconsultant)

YOUR GENTLE SLEEP COACH

Hello, I'm Monica.



I'm a pediatric sleep coach who believes deeply that babies and toddlers can sleep beautifully — without ever being left to cry. My approach is gentle, evidence-based, and always tailored to your unique little one.

I'd be honoured to walk alongside you on your sleep journey. You don't have to figure this out alone.

Monica

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Find me on Instagram → [@monica.babysleepconsultant](#)



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