Management of Sleep Problems in Infants and Toddlers

Ruth Oshikanlu QN
Outline

- Overview of Baby sleep patterns
- Reasons for poor sleeping patterns
- Every Baby is unique
- Management of poor sleeping patterns
- The Practitioner’s Role in Supporting Parents
Baseline

• How often do you encounter parents whose babies/toddlers have sleeping problems?

• Do you feel confident in supporting them?
Are you prepared for your new role as a parent? Do you feel as if you need an instruction manual?

I believe that most women want to parent well, regardless of whatever situation that they find themselves in. With some insight into why babies act the way they do, they can tune into their babies, find out what they need, meet them and enjoy parenting.

- How do I know what my baby needs?
- How can I be sure that I am doing the right things for my baby?
- How can I make the worrying and anxiety about caring for my baby go away?
- How can I enjoy parenting my baby?

These were my questions when I became a new mum. They are also the questions that I have found, from my professional experience as a health visitor, that parents want answered when their new baby is born.

*Tune In To Your Baby* was born out of my difficult experiences in pregnancy. After spending almost five months being hospitalised in pregnancy and a relationship breakdown, I was discharged home with a premature baby, extremely anxious about how to meet his needs.

*Tune In To Your Baby* will enable you to answer the above questions. In it, I share my journey and professional insights in order to assist you to find out and satisfy your baby’s needs. *Tune In To Your Baby* will facilitate you in choosing who you want to be, doing what you want to do so that you can enjoy parenting your baby from conception through to toddlerhood.

“Reading this book has made me chuckle in so many places as Ruth describes the exceptional journey of motherhood. She transports the reader using aspects of her own personal journey to guide you from the time you find out you are pregnant, using key milestones in your baby’s development from conception through to early toddlerhood. This book provides parents with the necessary information and know how to understand their baby’s needs and feelings so that they have the tools to support the rearing of an individual with its own thoughts and desires.”

– Professor Dame Donna Kinnair

Ruth Oshikanlu, RN (Adult), RM, RSCPHN (Health Visiting), QN is a nurse, midwife and practising Health Visitor. She is also a life and business coach and single parent. She is the owner of Goal Mind Limited, and helps individuals and businesses improve their performance in life and at work. Ruth is also a Queen’s Nurse.
Why is Sleep important?
Effects of Sleep Deprivation - Parents

- Increased incidence of accidents/injuries
- Slows down cognitive processes - poor concentration, impaired judgement and forgetfulness
- Leads to serious health problems – heart disease, hypertension, diabetes
- Poor maternal mental health - Anxiety and depression
- Weight gain
Effects of Sleep Deprivation - Children

• Accidents
• Obesity
• Behavioural problems e.g. hyperactivity
• Learning problems
• Sleeping problems later in life
• Health problems and emotional difficulties like depression and anxiety.
Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation is an effective form of TORTURE

It works!
Sleep Cycle

- All humans - adults and children sleep in cycles
- Sleep consists of two basic states:
  - Non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep or quiet sleep cover the first 4 stages of sleep
  - Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep or active sleep (Stage 5)
# Sleep Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Light sleep. Drift in and out of sleep. Easily woken up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Around 50% of time sleeping is spent in this stage. Eye movement stops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>First stage of deep sleep. Difficult to wake up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Second stage of deep sleep. Very difficult to wake up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-REM Sleep
Sleep Cycle

• Stage 5
  – REM sleep where dreaming occurs. Breathing becomes fast, irregular and shallow. Eyes move rapidly
  – About 20% of sleep is REM sleep
Sleep Cycle

![Graph showing sleep cycle stages over hours of sleep]
Sleep Cycle

• Each sleep cycle in an adult lasts about 90 minutes
• Adults have about 5 sleep cycles in a night’s sleep
• A newborn sleep cycle is 50-60 minutes long
• By 3 months of age this will increase to 90 minute cycles, the same as an adult
Reasons for Poor Sleep Patterns

- Between each sleep cycle there is a brief awakening – essential for survival
- Babies do the same
- They wake up between cycles
- But if they wake up and there has been a change in the surroundings, they may not go back to sleep
Reasons for Poor Sleep Patterns

• Sleep association – anything that a baby associates with sleep

• Unhelpful sleep associations – Cuddling/Rocking to sleep, falling asleep on the breast

• Poor bedtime routines

• Parent’s inconsistent behaviour
Management of Poor Sleeping Patterns

• Assess the situation
Management of Poor Sleeping Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Day</th>
<th>Time of Daytime Nap</th>
<th>Time Baby awakes</th>
<th>Time Bedtime Routine Starts</th>
<th>Time Baby is Put into Bed</th>
<th>Time Baby Sleeps</th>
<th>Time Baby awakes</th>
<th>Total No. Of Hrs Baby Asleep</th>
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</table>
Management of Poor Sleeping Patterns

• Help Parents Get To Know Their Baby
## Baby’s States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby’s State</th>
<th>Put a tick in the appropriate box every time you notice your baby is in that state (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep sleep</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Light sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drowsy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quite alert</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active alert</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crying</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Management of Poor Sleeping Patterns

• Educate parents
Management of Poor Sleeping Patterns

Prepare Parents

• In the first few weeks of life, the longest sleep period for infants is 4 hours

• Sleep patterns influenced by feeding patterns

• By 4 months this goes up to about 8 hours

• Internal circadian rhythms develop

• Production of melatonin which helps regulate sleep
# Average Hours of Sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 (3 naps)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3¾ (2 naps)</td>
<td>14¾</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3 (2 naps)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>11¾</td>
<td>2½ (2 naps)</td>
<td>13¾</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>11¾</td>
<td>2¼ (1 nap)</td>
<td>13½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2 (1 nap)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>10½</td>
<td>1½ (1 nap)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Every Baby Is Unique

- As such may require more or less sleep
- A baby has no set routine after birth and has to be taught
- Wait until breastfeeding is established
- From about 3 months is a good time to start a good bedtime routine
Bedtime Routine

• Helps baby to wind down
• Should last no longer than **20-30** minutes
• Bath, story time, baby massage, lullaby, say good night to everyone, etc
• Settle baby down to promote self-settling
• Reduce light, noise and social interaction
• Avoid feeding and unhelpful sleep associations
Common Toddler Sleep Problems

• Toddler does not sleep after putting them to bed
• Toddler keeps waking up in the middle of the night
• Toddler keeps crawling into parents bed at night
Other Causes of Sleep Problems

- Sick or unwell child
- Colic
- Change in diet – weaning e.g. food allergies
- Change in environment or routine
- Sleep disorders – night terrors, nightmares, sleep apnoea, etc.
Managing Sleep Problems

Consistency
AND
Persistence
Managing Sleep Problems

- Good bedtime routine
- Avoid unhelpful sleep associations
- Be patient – Every child is unique
- Teach your baby to self-soothe as soon as possible
- Understand toddler behaviour and be firm with your toddler
Toddler Behaviour

![Diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for toddlers]

- I need to be free
  Give me independence

- I need to feel good about myself
  Let me explore safely

- I need to be loved and to belong
  Show you care. Love me abundantly

- I need to feel safe
  Protect me. Help me feel safe and secure

- I need to survive outside the womb
  Feed me, keep me warm, let me breathe and let me sleep

Baby's Needs - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Managing Sleep Problems

• Controlled crying – From 8 months
• Allow the toddler to cry for a while
• Then reassure him before putting him back to sleep
• If he keeps crying, keep extending the interval between going to reassure him
• Although this is hard for parents, delayed gratification pays!
Managing Sleep Problems

• Gradual retreat
• Based on the concept of parents slowly distracting themselves from their child
• Parents adopt different degrees of physical closeness in order to help their child sleep independently
• Aim is to keep moving onto the next degree of physical separation until the parents are out of the room
• For parents who want a gentle/slow approach
Support parents

- Encourage them not to feel guilty about being firm
- Highlight the benefits of sleep for them and their infants/toddlers
- Enable them to promote good sleep habits
- Encourage them to be consistent and persistent
- If despite everything, sleep problems persist. Refer for specialist help
Signpost them to Evidence-based resources

• Useful evidence-based websites
• NHS Choices – Parenting videos
• E.g. How can I get my baby to sleep

Any Questions?
For More Info:

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