



Niitty – Developing a Peer-based Family  
Training Model for Immigrants

# **A YOUNG CHILD'S SLEEP**

Pienen lapsen uni ja nukkuminen





## **A REGULAR AND SUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF SLEEP IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT HELPS TO SECURE A CHILD'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

A new-born baby sleeps most of the day. Young babies take several short naps, and eating frequently sets the pace for their sleep. A young baby's sleep lacks rhythm.

At the age of 3–4 months, their daily rhythm is still irregular in most cases, but parents can actively seek support for establishing a daily rhythm for their baby.

Meals, naps, going outside and playing that occur at the same time in the day, as well as familiar evening routines helps your child learn to recognise the difference between night and day.

At the age of 3–4 months, the nightly intervals between feeds may have become longer, and it's worth trying to calm the baby down to sleep again without feeding. Quiet periods of sleep at night get longer.



At the age of 6 months, some children can already sleep through the night without waking up and no longer require a night-time feed.



## THE NEED FOR SLEEP AT VARIOUS AGES

Age	Need for sleep within 24 h on average
Newborn	16–17 hours
at 3–4 months of age	14–15 hours
at 6 months of age	13–14 hours
1 year old	12–13 hours
2 year old	12 hours
Every child is unique in how much sleep they need.	



## **ALWAYS PUT THE BABY TO SLEEP ON HIS OR HER BACK**

A child younger than 6 months should always be put to sleep on his or her back. It is recommended that a young baby sleep in the same room with the parents in his or her own cot.

If the baby sleeps in the family bed, the following things must be ensured:

- \* the baby must not sleep in the family bed if either of the parents smoke, uses alcohol or drugs
- \* the mattress must not be too soft
- \* there must be no risk of the baby falling off the bed
- \* the baby has his or her own duvet and the parents' duvet must not cover the baby
- \* the baby does not sleep next to a sibling
- \* no pets are allowed in the family bed



Most babies in Finland sleep outside in the pram in the daytime and often babies sleep better in the fresh air.



## **IT'S GOOD TO SUPPORT EVEN A YOUNG CHILD IN FALLING ASLEEP ON HIS OR HER OWN**

A parent soothes a crying child in their arms, but it's a good idea to put the baby in the baby's own cot before he or she falls asleep.

This helps the child learn to fall asleep on his or her own when waking up at night too.

It's important that the child gradually learns to fall asleep on his or her own without being held or fed.

You can support the child falling asleep on his or her own by separating feeding and sleeping from each other.



## TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SLEEP RHYTHM

- in the daytime it is light and there are normal everyday sounds  
at night it is dark and quiet.
- in the daytime you interact and play with the child, at night you only do the obligatory things (feeding, nappy change).
- regular evening routines that are repeated in the same way
- regular bedtime
- the child is put to sleep in the same place as where he or she wakes up.
- listen first for the child's cry: the child may make some sounds while trying to fall asleep and it is not necessary to react to them yet. If the child begins to cry louder, he or she needs a parent's support to calm down.
- from the age of 6 months, you can try various sleep schools to support the child's sleeping. You can find out more about them at the child welfare clinic.



## **ALSO SUPPORT THE CHILD IN FALLING ASLEEP AT LATER STAGES**

A 1-year-old child often has a regular daily rhythm. By the time they reach their first birthday, most children sleep 8–9 hours a night without waking up and take 1–2 naps. Some may still wake up a few times a night but they no longer need to be fed. The child can continue to sleep in the family bed or his or her own cot.



When your child learns to move about, you should remember to drop the bottom of the cot lower so that the child cannot fall out.

Children are often transferred from a cot to a children's bed at the latest before they turn two, because the child is then already good at climbing out of bed.

A toddler may find it challenging to fall asleep and may begin to wake up in the night again. The same methods as with younger babies can be used for supporting a 1-year-old in falling asleep.





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<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty/>

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