



Capital District
Child Care Council

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2

I Can Rock-A-Bye Myself

No one really sleeps through the night. Sleep comes in cycles that happen several times during rest. Between these sleep cycles, babies enter a state of “quiet awake.” Self-soothing helps babies settle themselves enough to go back to sleep without waking up completely. Babies who have not developed self soothing skills will wake up completely, crave their caregiver’s attention and cry. A newborn may need feeding or changing and wake at these times, but once these basic needs have been met, self soothing skills can help babies return to sleep.

Steps to help a baby get to sleep... and stay there

1. Lay babies down on their backs when they are deeply asleep (breathing slowly, regularly and lying still). This state of sleep typically happens within 20-30 minutes after falling asleep.
2. Little by little, lay babies down a bit earlier, just a minute or two at first.
3. A few nights/naps later, put them down a bit earlier again. This gradually eases a baby from being laid down asleep, towards at half sleep, drowsy, less drowsy and eventually awake. This gentle self soothing method may happen over a period of time. Babies learning to self soothe need a caregivers support and patience as they practice this life long skill.



A caregiver can support self soothing babies by

1. Developing a bed time routine that appeals to baby’s preferences
2. Keeping lights dim and interactions quiet at night to help babies move toward a sleepy state
3. Providing a soft nightlight. The glow can be reassuring to a baby that wakes mid sleep and may encourage her to go back to sleep on her own.
4. Staying quietly within sight of babies who are learning to self regulate. Just a caregiver’s presence may be enough to lull a baby back to sleep.
5. Allowing babies to have a “lovey” (pacifier/ quiet toy/ *blanket “square” that smells like “home”) with them during rest.

*When choosing a self regulation item, adults should think ahead to what they may consider appropriate as children grow older. Often toddlers and preschoolers may still need these items to help them cope. Giving up these items should be handled gradually on the child’s terms with thoughtful adult support.

Resource: *Self Soothing to Help Baby Sleep through the Night*/www.baby-sleep-advice.com/self-soothing.html



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**Self-soothing
is the key to
helping babies sleep
through the night**



Remember: Safe sleep allows no loose bedding in cribs due to suffocation hazard

For more information call 518 426-7181

For more tipsheets visit www.cdccc.org