

ROBBINS NEST CHILD CARE SERVICES

Sleep Coaching and Infant Nursery

A Calming Bedtime Routine for Baby


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Creating a calming bedtime routine for your baby is a wonderful way to signal that it's time to wind down and prepare for sleep. A consistent routine can help your baby associate these activities with sleep, making the transition smoother. Doing the same routine consistently each night instills a sense of safety and security, both of which are essential for a good night's sleep. It can help reduce the number of tears because children love to know what is going to happen. A consistent bedtime routine may also reduce the amount of time it takes your little one to fall asleep.




Below are some suggested activities to help you create a calming bedtime routine for your baby.


Note: These suggestions are ideal for children under age one year. Bedtime routine suggestions for older children are coming soon.

 **Dim the Lights:** As bedtime approaches, dim the lights in the areas baby will be. This helps signal to your baby that it's time to wind down. Dim lighting also aids in the production of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.

 **Quiet Play:** Engage in some quiet and calming playtime with your baby. This can involve gentle rocking, playing peek-a-boo, or simply talking to your baby. Be emotionally available and turn off any outside distractions such as the TV, cell phones, or tablets. Do your best to avoid stimulating activities that might get your baby too excited right before bed.

 **Warm Bath:** A warm bath can be a great activity to help your baby relax. If your baby doesn't enjoy bath time, consider doing this earlier in the day so they have time to calm down and relax afterwards. If they do enjoy bath time, consider making this activity part of your bedtime routine. The warm water can relax your baby's muscles and provide a sensory experience that aids in relaxation.

Pro-Tip- Using only warm water during the bath works great. You do not need to use soap daily.

 **Massage:** After a bath, or on days you choose not to give a bath, give your baby a gentle massage using baby lotion or oil. Use soft, rhythmic strokes to help them relax and unwind. This can also provide a wonderful bonding opportunity between you and your baby.



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☾^{*} **Feeding:** It can be helpful to offer a feeding session before sleep. Ensure they are well-fed as this can help prevent waking due to hunger during the night. Feed with the dim light on and try not to have them fall asleep during the feed. If they do fall asleep, gently unlatch, or remove the bottle.

Pro-Tip- It can be helpful to gently rouse your baby before placing them into bed, and sooth them with pats and shushes until they are asleep. This helps them be aware of their surroundings and feel more confident in getting themselves back to sleep if they wake during the night.

☾^{*} **Lullabies or Calming Music:** Sing to your baby or play soft, calming instrumental music in the background. Music can have a soothing effect on both babies and adults, helping to create a peaceful atmosphere.

☾^{*} **Swaddle or Sleep Sack:** If your baby is still very young and enjoys being swaddled, gently wrap them in a soft, breathable swaddle blanket or suit. Alternatively, you can use a sleep sack to provide a cozy and secure feeling. Sleep sacks come in all different fabrics so you can select the ideal one to keep your baby comfortable and warm throughout the year.

Safety Tip- If your baby is already rolling over, swaddling is not recommended.

☾^{*} **Bedtime Story:** Read a short bedtime story or two to your baby. Keep your voice soothing and soft as you read.

☾^{*} **Dim Lights Further:** Before leaving the room, dim the lights further or turn on a soft nightlight. It can be helpful to have a completely dark room if you find your baby is distracted by light.

☾^{*} **White Noise:** Utilize a white noise machine. Soft, consistent sounds like white noise or gentle rain can create a soothing environment that masks any household or outside noises.

Pro-Tip- If you have a barking dog or exceptionally loud home, do not be afraid to use more than one sound machine. Just be sure to follow safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.

☾^{*} **Place in Bed:** When your baby is drowsy but still awake, place them in their bed. If this seems challenging, it is ok to do what works for you for now to get your baby asleep in their bed. If you find yourself wanting to work towards more independent sleep skills, this is a great activity to practice after your baby is a few months old.

Remember, the key to a successful bedtime routine is consistency. Over time, your baby will come to associate these activities with sleep, making it easier for them to settle down and drift off into a peaceful slumber. Feel free to adjust the routine to suit your baby's preferences and needs, and don't forget to cherish these precious moments of bonding and relaxation.

Keri is available for consultations should you find yourself in need of more personalized support. All services can be found at www.robbsinestchildcareservices.com/book-online.