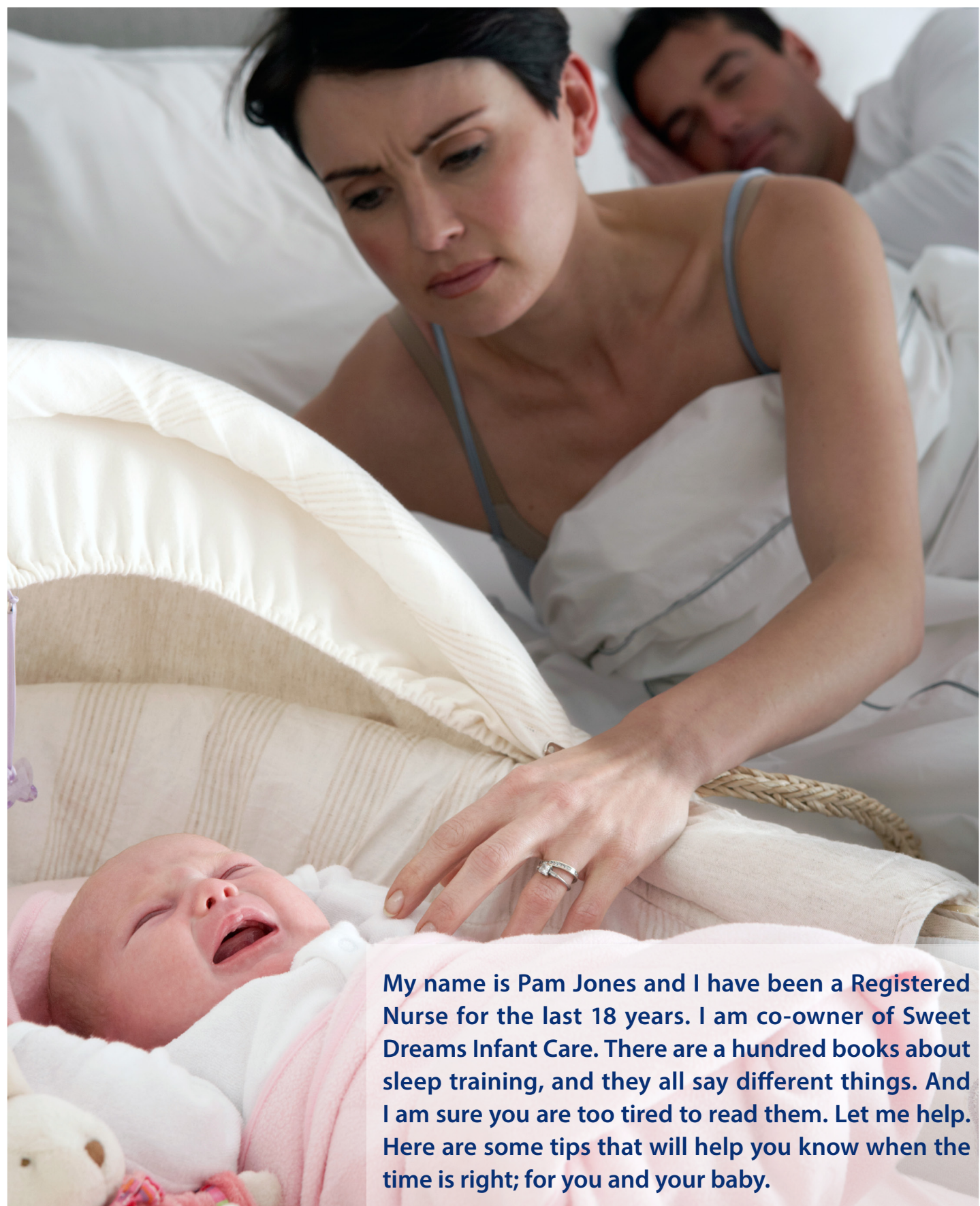


Are you sleep deprived and confused about when is the best time to sleep train your baby?



My name is Pam Jones and I have been a Registered Nurse for the last 18 years. I am co-owner of Sweet Dreams Infant Care. There are a hundred books about sleep training, and they all say different things. And I am sure you are too tired to read them. Let me help. Here are some tips that will help you know when the time is right; for you and your baby.

1 Start teaching self-soothing as soon as you get home from the hospital. You won't let your baby cry, but you can try not to establish bad habits like always holding, rocking, and feeding your baby into a sound sleep. These are habits that you will have to break later. Give your baby a pacifier when you know they are not hungry, wet or uncomfortable and allow them to fall asleep on their own. Teaching self-soothing is the most important thing you can do to help your baby to eventually sleep well on their own.

2 At 6 weeks old from your baby's due date, start an early bedtime routine, between 6pm-7pm. I know this may be difficult with many parents' work schedule, but I promise it is temporary and worth it. Parents may need to spend more time with their babies in the morning instead of at night.

Babies need to be in bed before they are overtired. Set up a nighttime routine bath, massage, book, song, swaddle, feed etc. Limit to 30 min if you are giving a bath, 10-15 minutes when you are not. Then put baby down drowsy but awake so they can learn to self soothe. Your baby will still wake up often for feedings, but you will be establishing an early bedtime routine. Once the baby turns over on their stomach you must take off the swaddle for safety reasons. Sleep deprivation is just as hard on the baby as it is on you. Keeping your baby up later at night will not help them sleep later in the morning. It usually backfires and you have more nighttime wakes and fussy mornings.



3 We have had our best success with singletons that are 4 months old from due date. A lot of books say 3 months, but I have found over the last 5 years of sleep training that 3 months is just too young and there is a lot more crying. Twins must be 5 months from due date. Triplets need to be 6 months from their due date. Always check with your doctor before any sleep training is started.

4 They need to be eating at least 24 oz. in 12 hours during the day. Example 7am-7pm. Feed every 4 hours during the day 6-8 oz. bottles, in order to eliminate night feedings. If Breastfeeding check baby's weight with your doctor.

5 Weight must be at least 12 lbs., with no medical problems, colds, teething etc.

6 Is this the right time for you and your baby? Everyone must be ready to start and stay consistent. Don't plan to start sleep training when you are having company staying with you, or you are going on vacation.

7 Keep a log for at least 3 days before you start. This will help you to identify issues and patterns and choose the best solution for you and your family. Continue the log while you are sleep training and you will be able to see the progress you're making which will encourage you to keep moving forward.



8 Choose a sleep training technique that you can use again. Life happens, you may go on vacation, which can disrupt her sleep, or she may get sick or be teething. At these times we all revert to holding our babies or feeding them in the night. It only takes three nights for a new sleep pattern to establish. Which means you may need to sleep train again, and this is why it's so important you can fall back on the sleep training technique you used before. Whatever the sleep training technique you choose be consistent.

9 Choose a sleep training method that you can cope with. If you're exhausted, at your wits end, perhaps even feeling angry with your baby, hire someone to do the sleep training for you. Or just for a night or two, have someone help you with the baby so you can catch up on sleep yourself. It is very easy to resort back to bad habits when you are exhausted.

10 Our techniques combine many different sleep-training techniques. You need to gauge the temperament of the baby; the same process does not work for every baby.

11 Consistent unhealthy sleep can affect your babies growth and development. You are teaching them healthy sleep habits, remember you are doing this for them not to them (keep reminding yourself of that when they are crying).

12 Sleep training is the hardest part of our job, but it is by far the most rewarding. Helping parents get back their life is very satisfying. Sleep deprivation affects every aspect of your family. It is so gratifying to see parents able to have some time to themselves to reconnect and spend time together. Important point is to understand to stay calm, know this time will pass and that you are not alone. Do not

compare your baby to others. There are always stories from parents about how their babies have been sleeping through the night since they came home from the hospital. Know that is not the norm, and probably not true. Remember there are many different definitions to what "sleeping through the night" means.

13 When your baby is awake in the AM, give her lots of loving attention. Open the shades in the morning, and make it a happy event. Get them immediately out of bed, change clothes and start their day.

Every baby is wonderful and unique and will learn to sleep when they have the skills. Your baby may be upset with the process, but will recognize going to sleep on her own is now part of her new routine. Teaching your child to sleep is one of the greatest gifts you can give your baby. It is only one of the many skills you will need to teach your children through their lifetime.



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