Loved to Sleep

Baby Sleep Guide

Nurture Your Baby To Sleep
With Minimal To No Crying

Jen Varela & Andrea Strang

www.lovedtosleep.com

## CONTENTS

WELCOME

I am so glad you found the Loved to Sleep book and method. It is our sincere hope that this guide gives you some valuable insight into sleep coaching, wherever you are on your journey. This guide consolidates the key sleep coaching essentials in an easy to digest manner. The information contained in this guide is relevant to most families and can be used right away.

When parents are making the best parenting decisions for their children it is in the moments that require parents to listen to their children, assess their need and then intentionally respond. This is also true when training your baby to sleep. The Loved to Sleep Method is a nurturing strategy in which you invest your time to reduce the amount of crying and improve sleep. Essentially, you are trading tears for time. This method is designed to give you the tools to assess what is right for your family. Not every family has the same expectations or wants the same end result with regards to how and where their baby sleeps.

If you find you want more then you can purchase the "Loved to Sleep" book on Amazon. For more information go to LovedToSleep.com.
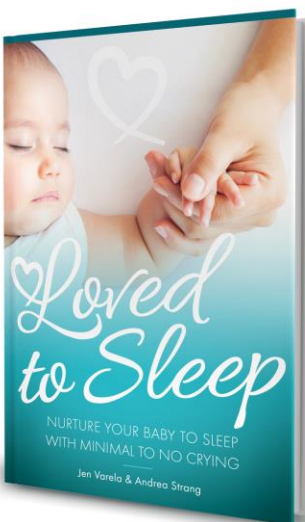
BEDTIME IS THE RIGHT TIME TO START SLEEP COACHING

There will be work involved in teaching your baby to self-soothe. But you don't have to cry it out at bedtime and all night long. The Loved to Sleep method allows you to go at your pace, support your parental intuition and address your baby's needs, all while being present with your baby. The Loved to Sleep Method is a nurturing strategy in which you invest your time to reduce the amount of crying and improve sleep. Essentially, you are trading tears for time. This method is designed to give you the tools to assess what is right for your family. Not every family has the same expectations or wants the same end result around how and where their baby sleeps.

With the Loved to Sleep Method, we'll give you step-by-step tools to gently nudge your little one to better sleep. The Loved to Sleep Method is highly adaptable to your family's unique sleep needs and is mindful of the temperament of your baby. You will focus on small Sleep Shifts, which keep you moving towards your desired goal – all while keeping tears to a minimum.

This method is geared towards babies between the ages of six months and 16 months. The Loved to Sleep Method is a sleep coaching method; you coach your baby as they learn new sleep skills.

Bedtime is the most important time to work on sleep skills. Here's why:

- *It is the easiest time* for your baby to learn to fall asleep. Compared with the middle of the night, your baby has the advantage of being at the end of a wakeful state in which they have been observing and learning all day.

- *There is significant pressure to sleep* at bedtime. Sleep pressure is working in your favor at the end of the day. The body's wakeful system is peaking and the hormone melatonin is released as the lights dim, increasing sleepiness. In addition,

other bodily forces, such as felt sleep pressure and the circadian rhythm, are gearing up for sleep.

- *It is the time when* **you** *set the expectation* of how your baby is to fall asleep and stay asleep. Sleep associations at bedtime have a significant impact on expectations and needs through the night. For example, by rocking your baby to sleep, you essentially tell your baby that it is your job to do the rocking to get them to sleep. So in the middle of the night when your baby rouses, your baby fully expects you to come back and do your job of rocking them back to sleep. Because they did not learn the skill at bedtime, they have no ability to fall asleep without it through the night.

Keep in mind whatever support you offer your baby at bedtime, they will expect the same support or more in the middle of the night.

If you need to start tonight, in the "Loved to Sleep" book there are Quick-start Steps that will give you steps on how to start teaching your baby to self-sooth tonight.

FINE-TUNE BEDTIME ROUTINE

Having a relaxing bedtime routine will help your baby when it's time to fall asleep at the end of the day. Ultimately these steps will create a strong association between these actions and the feeling of falling asleep. Your routine should consist of 3-5 simple steps that you can do consistently every night right before helping your baby to sleep. Your routine does not have to be elaborate or long. Ideally it is between 10 minutes and 30 minutes. Whether or not you include a bath in your bedtime routine is not important, especially if you are not going to do it every night.

CONNECTION & SAFETY

The most important components of your bedtime routine are Connection & Safety. It's important that your baby feels safe and secure in order to fall asleep. It's your job to help your baby feel that all is well with the world, that there are no imminent threats, and that it is safe to rest. It's important that you calm yourself before you start bedtime so you can give that calm to your baby as you connect with your baby during your bedtime routine. If you are feeling stressed or anxious your baby will pick up on that and have a hard time falling and staying asleep.

"Your primary aim at bedtime is to bring your child down from a super alert awake state by activating the calming brain chemical oxytocin and the sleep hormone Melatonin."

-Margot Sunderland, The Science of Parenting p. 66

There are a few activities that have been shown in research to specifically promote sleep-inducing brain chemicals and hormones, including: sitting together and reading a bedtime story, massage, and dim lighting

SET UP YOUR IDEAL SLEEP LOCATION

Where would you like your child to sleep once their sleep has improved? What is your ultimate sleep location goal? Where would you like your baby to sleep in the short-term?

TIME FOR BEDTIME

Putting your baby to bed before they are overtired is going to be important. Most babies have a bedtime that naturally falls between 6:00-8:00 p.m. Sometimes an even earlier bedtime is needed (at least temporarily) but we would suggest 6 p.m. be the

earliest bedtime. You can determine your child's bedtime by watching their sleep signs and experimenting with when the best time to put them down is. It may help to keep a log for 1-2 weeks that compares the length and time of the last nap, wakeful window before bedtime, bedtime, and the length of time it takes for your baby to fall asleep. Bedtime can fluctuate within 30 minutes, depending on how the day goes. If you see your baby showing tired signs earlier, you may want to move your bedtime up or shorten your bedtime routine so they can get into bed sooner.

Average Wakeful Window Chart

Age	Average Maximum Wakeful Window
4.5 - 5.5 Months	1.5 to 2 Hours
6 Months	2.25 Hours
8 - 10 Months	2.5 Hours
11 - 12 Months	3 to 3.5 Hours
12 - 18 Months	3 to 4 Hours Between Last Nap and Bedtime Asleep

RECOMMENDED SLEEP AVERAGES

Just getting your baby enough sleep can reduce night awakenings and early rising.

NEWBORNS (0-3 MONTHS)	11-19 Hours Per 24 Hours	Newborns sleep on an irregular schedule with periods of one to three hours spent awake. The sleep period may last a few minutes to several hours. During sleep, they are often active, twitching their arms and legs, smiling, sucking and generally appearing restless.
INFANTS (4-11 MONTHS)	10-18 Hours Per 24 Hours	By six months of age, nighttime feedings are usually not necessary and many infants sleep through the night; 70-80 percent will do so by nine months of age. Infants typically sleep 9-12 hours during the night and take 30 minute to two-hour naps, one to four times a day.
TODDLERS (1-2 YEARS)	9-16 Hours Per 24 Hours	Toddlers need 9-16 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. When they reach about 18 months of age their nap times will decrease to once a day lasting about one to three hours. Naps should not occur too close to bedtime as they may delay sleep at night.
PRESCHOOLERS (3-5 YEARS)	8-14 Hours Per 24 Hours	Preschoolers typically sleep 8-14 hours each night and most do not nap after five years of age. As with toddlers, difficulty falling asleep and waking up during the night are common. With further development of imagination, preschoolers commonly experience nighttime fears and nightmares. In addition, sleepwalking and sleep terrors peak during preschool years.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

DAYTIME NAPPING STRATEGIES

Daytime sleep is important to keep your baby well-rested and has a significant positive influence on night sleep. However, day sleep skills are often more challenging to learn than bedtime skills. While you are working on bedtime and nighttime sleep, we recommend doing whatever is easiest to get your baby's naps in. To get the naps, it is OK if it means holding your baby or using the motion of a carrier, swing, or stroller. It is fine to nurse, feed or comfort your baby to sleep for naps in the short term.

> *If you have something that works to keep your baby rested in the daytime then use it. You can focus on night sleep for now and work on improving day sleep skills later.*

You may find that your baby's naps improve on their own as their night sleep gets better. Or you may find that you are able to manage in the daytime and are not concerned with naps. If this is the case there is no need to do nap coaching. It is our recommendation that you work on the self-soothing skills at bedtime first, then night wakings, and once that is going well you can address nap coaching.

DETERMINE YOUR SLEEP GOALS

What are your long-term and short-term goals for your child's sleep? Do you want your baby to sleep through the night? By what age? What does sleeping through the night mean for your family? Would you be happy with a peaceful bedtime and evening? Are you wanting one or more longer stretches of sleep? Are you OK with one or more night wakings or night feedings? When do you hope to accomplish these goals?

It's a good idea to write down your goals so you can refer back to them when you are evaluating your sleep strategy throughout the process. Your goals may change during this sleep coaching journey and that is fine and expected. Remember, sleep

coaching is not a linear process, and as you learn about your baby in the sleep coaching journey, you might identify new needs that you were not aware of before starting sleep coaching.

Determine your long term sleep goal:

Things to consider:

- Where do you want the baby to sleep?

- How do you want to put your baby to sleep?

- What is currently working?

- What is your night feeding plan?

- How much sleep does your baby need?

At the end of this "Loved to Sleep Baby Sleep Guide" we have included a Fill-in Sleep Plan to help you assess and write down your sleep goals.

We realize you might be reading this guide asking yourself, "What can I do now? Tonight? I can't keep going being this sleep deprived or having my baby this exhausted and over-stimulated. Maybe I need to do cry-it-out?"

There are other options! You don't have to do cry-it-out and you don't have to do something that leaves you feeling guilty. You can honor both your own needs and the needs of your baby. Your parental intuition is an important part of coaching your baby to learn how to self-soothe. We use the word learn intentionally because sleep is a learned skill. You can support your baby as you nudge your little one to do a bit of the work to learn how to self-regulate and self-soothe.

With the Loved to Sleep Method, we'll give you step-by-step tools to gently nudge your little one to better sleep. The Loved to Sleep Method is highly adaptable to your

family's unique sleep needs and is mindful of the temperament of your baby. You will focus on small Sleep Shifts, which keep you moving towards your desired goal – all while keeping tears to a minimum. We highly recommend that you get our "Loved to Sleep" book, and consider beginning with our Loved to Sleep Quick-start Steps. To get more information on the book and method visit LovedToSleep.com

Please stay in touch. We want to hear how things are going and we are here to support you. Be sure to visit the Loved to Sleep Facebook page. Feel free to post your experience and get the support from other parents who are also using the Loved to Sleep Method.

We are with you in heart and wish you many nights of sweet sleep.

Warmly,

Jen and Andrea

Loved to Sleep Worksheet

Sleep Plan For: _____ Age: _____

Note: Meet with Doctor and/or Lactation professional to rule out potential underlying medical conditions interfering with sleep and to discuss your night feeding goals prior to sleep coaching.

Ultimate Sleep Goals: _____

Desired Sleep Location: _____

Short-term Sleep Location Options: ☐ Separate Sleep Space _____
                                                           ☐ Separate at Bedtime then Bedshare
                                                           ☐ Bedshare Entire Night

Sleep Friendly Environment: ☐ Noise   ☐ Lighting
                                                 ☐ Temperature   ☐ Other _____

Bedtime Routine: 1. _____
                                2. _____
                                3. _____
                                4. _____
                                5. _____

Initial Bedtime: _____ Natural Bedtime (Suspected): _____

Early Sleep Signs: _____

Advanced Sleep Signs: _____

Wakeful Window After Long Nap (More than 45 Minutes): _____

Wakeful Window After Short Nap (Less Than 45 Minutes): _____

Sleep Coaching Method (Which Lane Are You In?): _____
        ☐ Coaching at Bedtime Only (Slow Lane)
        ☐ Coaching at Bedtime & Beginning of Night (Middle Lane) Until: _____
        ☐ Coaching at Bedtime & Through Entire Night (Fast Lane)

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Base Sleep Association (What Are You Doing Now?): _____

Planned Sleep Shifts:

1. _____ → _____

2. _____ → _____

3. _____ → _____

4. _____ → _____

5. _____ → _____

6. _____ → _____

7. _____ → _____

8. _____ → _____

Middle of the Night Sleep Coaching Steps/Strategies (If Different than Above):

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Night Feeding Goal: _____

Daytime Feeding Plan: _____

Current Night Feeding Times: _____

      Quantity/Length: _____

Planned Dreamfeed Times: _____

Goal for Weaning Dreamfeeds: _____

Morning Routine (Dramatic Wake Up): _____

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jen Varela

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Since 2010, San Diego sleep training expert Jen Varela has helped more than 3000 sleep-deprived families have sweet sleep. She focuses on the achievement of each family's sleep goals whether in co-sleeping environments, room sharing, or separate rooms. Jen's experience ranges from helping families with infants in sleep shaping skills

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to families with toddlers and/or kindergartners who are transitioning them to their own room for the first time.

Jen Varela is a mother of two children. She holds a bachelor's degree in Human Services with an emphasis in Counseling from California State University Fullerton, California. She is a member of the International Association of Child Sleep Consultants and a Certified Gentle Sleep Coach® trained by Kim West, The Sleep Lady® and has completed the Infant Mental Health Community Training with The Hospital for Sick Children.

You can read more about Jen's training, philosophy, and experience at http://sugarnightnight.com/jen-varela-gentle-sleep-coach/

Andrea Strang

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Andrea is a Certified Gentle Sleep Coach®, Postpartum Doula and Faculty member in the Gentle Sleep Coach program with Kim West, through which she enjoys teaching and mentoring other Gentle Sleep Coaches around the world. She has provided practical, emotional and informational support to families since 1999. Andrea started her sleep coach education and sleep business, KinderSleep in 2004, and has since helped over 6000 families get better sleep. She has extensive training in child sleep, and infant mental health as well as adult insomnia. Andrea is a Co-creator of the Gentle Baby Solutions program and the founder of the Child Sleep Institute. She has also spent over 10,000 hours providing in-home sleep support with families.

When she is not helping families and teaching, Andrea enjoys cooking and spending time with her husband and adult children at their rural home in Ontario, Canada.

You can read more about Andrea's training, philosophy and experience at https://kindersleep.com/andrea-strang-bio/