

## Help Me Sleep-My baby isn't sleeping anymore!

I wanted to address this topic because I have had a few phone calls about this recently. The parents have successfully initiated their children's new routine and were enjoying more sleep and then BAM! The baby or toddler isn't sleeping again. When investigating the possible reasons for this we need to look closely at your routine and the developmental stage they are going through. It doesn't mean that your 'routine' isn't working or your child has forgotten how to sleep well and yes they will sleep well again.

Consider the following:

1. The 'routine' doesn't make your baby or toddler a perfect sleeper. It is a plan to create great sleeping and then a back up plan for unsettled days and nights. There are many natural and normal reasons for your child waking and asking for reassurance overnight. For example: Hungry, age of distraction, illness, teething, increased mobility, worms, food intolerances, nightmares, sleep walking, night terrors, too hot, too cold, a sudden noise, a change in environment, holidays, different carers, parents returning to work, reflux, colic, eczema, overtired, family stress, injury and more.

2. As the parent 'you are the routine' for the child with your consistency and persistency. So when you feel the 'routine' isn't working anymore it's not the routine itself but rather the application of the routine that may not be working. The routine is not 'fixing' the child, it is a consistent and persistent application of the 'routine' that produces the results. Therefore if you know that your application of the 'routine' has changed maybe with different carers, a child being sick, a change to your daily plan, travelling interfering with the routine, then yes we can fine tune the 'routine' approach and improve the sleep outcomes again. If you feel that nothing about the application of the routine has changed, then we need to look at your baby/toddlers developmental stage and see what else could be affecting their sleep.

3. If you find a sudden change in your baby or toddler's sleep consider whether there have been any changes in the application of your routine and then consider if a normal developmental stage is the reason. Once you have identified the reason for the waking we need to address it appropriately, respond accordingly, sometimes wait until the stage passes (such as illness, teething, nightmares, age of distraction) but remain as reassuring, consistent and persistent as possible.

My Holiday tip: Remember it doesn't matter 'WHERE' you are, it's 'WHEN' your baby or toddler is due for sleep that is important. Remain consistent and persistent with your 'going to bed' routine and create a sleeping environment in the capsule, stroller, port-a-cot or other when asking your baby or toddler to sleep. If your baby or toddler isn't sleeping well it won't be a holiday for anyone.

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