

## Older Baby

### Articles:

Baby Tantrums	p.1
Car Seat Crying	p.3
Airplane Travel with a Baby	p.5
Choosing Toys for Babies	p.11
Stop the Diaper Changing Battles	p.15
Going Visiting with your Baby	p.17
Solving Naptime Problems	p.19
Road Trip with Baby	p.21
Postpartum Depression	p.24
How to Have a Happy Marriage When You're Busy Being Parents	p.27
Separation Anxiety	p.29
Handling Unwanted Advice	p.31
What is Preventing Your Baby From Sleeping Through the Night	p.33
8 Sleep Tips for Every Child	p.35

These articles are reprinted with permission from author Elizabeth Pantley. For more information, please see her website at [www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth)

### Baby Tantrums

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

#### Learn about it

A baby's first tantrum can take you by surprise. Your baby can really shock you by shrieking, stamping, hitting, or making his whole body go stiff. But don't take it personally; baby tantrums aren't about anything you've done wrong, and they aren't really about *temper*, either – your baby isn't old enough for that. The ways you'll respond to your baby's behavior when he is older are different than how you should respond now.

#### Why babies have tantrums and what you can do about it

A baby tantrum is an abrupt and sudden loss of emotional control. Various factors bring tantrums on, and if you can identify the trigger, then you can help him calm down — and perhaps even avoid the tantrum in the first place. Here are the common reasons and ways to solve the problem:

Reason for tantrum	Possible solution
Overtiredness	Settle baby down to sleep; Provide quiet activity
Hunger	Give baby a snack or something to drink
Frustration	Help baby achieve his goal or remove the frustration; Use distraction
Fear/anxiety	Hold and cuddle baby; Remove baby from difficult situation
Inability to communicate	Try to figure out what he wants; Calmly encourage him to show you
Resisting change	Allow a few minutes for baby to make adjustment
Over stimulation	Move baby to a quiet place

### **How to prevent baby tantrums**

Often, you can prevent a baby from losing control of his emotions if you prevent the situations that lead up to this. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- When baby is tired, put him down for a nap or to sleep.
- Feed your baby frequently. Babies have small tummies and need regular nourishment.
- Give your baby toys that are geared to his age and ability level.
- Warn your baby before changing activities (“One more swing, then we’re going home”).
- Be patient when putting your baby in an unfamiliar environment or when introducing him to new people.
- Help your baby learn new skills (such as climbing stairs or working puzzles).
- Keep your expectations realistic; don’t expect more than your baby is capable of.
- As much as possible, keep a regular and predictable schedule.
- When your baby is overly emotional, keep yourself as calm as possible.
- Use a soothing tone of voice and gentle touch to help your baby calm down. He can’t do it on his own, he needs your help.

## Car Seat Crying

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

**Some babies fall asleep almost before you're out of the driveway, but others won't spend five happy minutes in their car seats.** Usually, this is because your baby is used to more freedom of movement and more physical attention than you can provide when she's belted into her seat.

Hearing your baby cry while you are trying to drive is challenging. Even though it's difficult to deal with, remember that you and your baby's safety are most important. Parents sometimes take a crying baby out of the car seat, which is extremely dangerous and makes it even more difficult for the baby to get used to riding in the car seat. Some parents make poor driving decisions when their babies are crying, which puts everyone in the car at risk. Either pull over and calm your baby down, or focus on your driving. Don't try to do both. The good news is that a few new ideas and a little time and maturity will help your baby become a happy traveler. (I know, because three of my babies were car-seat-haters!)

### **The trip to car seat happiness**

Any one (or more) of the following strategies may help solve your car seat dilemma. If the first one you try fails, choose another one, then another; eventually, you'll hit upon the right solution for your baby.

#### **Make sure that your baby is healthy.**

If car seat crying is something new, and your baby has been particularly fussy at home, too, your baby may have an ear infection or other illness. A visit to the doctor is in order.

#### **Bring the car seat in the house and let your baby sit and play in it.**

Once it becomes more familiar in the house, she may be happier to sit there in the car.

**Keep a special box of soft, safe car toys that you'll use only in the car.** If these are interesting enough, they may hold her attention. (Avoid hard toys because they could cause injury in a quick stop.)

#### **Tape or hang toys for viewing.**

You can do this on the back of the seat that your baby is facing or string an array of lightweight toys from the ceiling using heavy tape and yarn. Place them just at arm's reach so that your baby can bat at them from her seat. (Don't use hard toys that could hurt your baby if they come loose in a quick stop.)

#### **Make a car mobile.**

Link a long row of plastic baby chains from one side of the backseat to the other. Clip soft, lightweight new toys onto the chain for each trip. Make sure they are secure and keep an eye on these so that they don't become loose while you are driving.

#### **Hang a made-for-baby poster on the back of the seat that faces your baby.**

These are usually black, white, red and bold primary colors; some even have pockets so you can change the pictures. (Remember to do this, since changing the scenery is very helpful.)

#### **Experiment with different types of music in the car.**

Some babies enjoy lullabies or music tapes made especially for young children; others surprise you by calming down as soon as you play one of your favorites. Some babies enjoy hearing Mom or Dad sing, more than anything else! (For some reason, a rousing chorus of "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer" has always been a good choice for us, even out of season!)

#### **Try "white noise" in the car.**

You can purchase CDs of soothing nature sounds or you can make a recording of your vacuum cleaner!

#### **Practice with short, pleasant trips when your baby is in a good mood.**

It helps if someone can sit near her and keep her entertained. A few good experiences may help set a new pattern.

#### **Try a pacifier or teething toy.**

When your baby has something to suck or chew on he may be happier. Just make sure it doesn't present a choking hazard, and keep to small, soft toys.

#### **Hang a mirror.**

That way your baby can see you (and you can see your baby) while you are driving. Baby stores offer specialty mirrors made especially for this purpose. When in her seat, she may think that you're not there, and just seeing your face will help her feel better.

**Put up a sunshade in the window.**

This can be helpful if you suspect that sunshine in your baby's face may be a problem. Use the window-stick-on types, and avoid any with hard pieces that could become dislodged in a quick stop.

**Try to consolidate trips.**

Trip-chaining is effective, especially if you avoid being in the car for long periods of time, and you don't have many ins-and-outs.

**Make sure your baby hasn't outgrown her car seat.**

If her legs are confined, or her belts are too tight, she may find her seat to be uncomfortable.

**Try opening a window.**

Fresh air and a nice breeze can be soothing.

**If all else fails . . . take the bus!**

## Airplane Travel with a Baby

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Gentle Baby Care* and *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

### Question

We're about to take our first airplane trip with our one-year-old. We flew quite a bit before she was born, but now we're not sure what to pack or how to make this trip successful.

### Learn about it

Even if you racked up your share of frequent flyer miles before your baby was born, forget what you know of travel so far. Flying with a little one is a whole different story.

If you fear turning into one of those families we've all met aboard planes — those with squalling, unruly, squirming children who tend to bring out the same traits in their fellow passengers — take heart. My oldest child, Angela was just 14 days old when she took her first flight, and since then, I've taken many more trips with my four children. *I know* that you can travel with your little ones and enjoy the process. Forethought and preparation are the keys.

### Planning the trip

The details of your trip often can mean the difference between success and disaster. Keep these ideas in mind as you plan:

- Examine all aspects of the journey when you book your flights. Aim for direct flights so that you can avoid changing planes. If you have to make a change, avoid short layovers that give you too little time to get from gate to gate, and conversely avoid long layovers that require lots of idle time in airports.
- When you make your reservations, give the agent the ages of all passengers. You may learn some important rules such as:
  - FAA regulations allow only one lap-child per adult. If you are traveling with two children, and only one adult, one child will require a seat of his own. (Not that you would want to travel with two children on your lap!)
  - Some airlines do not allow newborns to fly, check on age requirements.
  - Some airlines offer discounted prices for children's tickets.
  - Most airplanes have only one *extra* oxygen mask in each row, which means you can only seat one lap-child *in each row*. If two adults are traveling with two children, consider sitting across the aisle from each other, or two behind two.
  - Some airlines count carseats or strollers as extra baggage.
- If your child falls asleep easily and stays asleep, try scheduling travel for during your child's nap or sleep times. If you have a finicky sleeper, on the other hand, avoid traveling during usual sleep times, as your baby may just stay fussy and awake.
- Reserve your seats in advance to be sure your entire party sits together.
  - If you have an infant, ask for the bulkhead (front row) and request a bassinet.
  - Contrary to popular advice, I think it's best to avoid the bulkhead with older babies and toddlers, because these seats offer neither under-seat space nor seat pocket, so you'll have to store all your toys and supplies in the overhead compartment. Also, in the bulkhead, the food tray pops up from the armrest, effectively trapping you in your seat when your table is laden with food.
  - Don't put your child in the aisle seat, as the food cart and passengers carrying luggage could injure your child.

- Ask what special features your airline offers for families. Some companies offer children's meals, bassinets, gate check for strollers, or early boarding privileges.
- If you can afford to do so, buy a seat for your child and bring along his carseat. Your baby is used to being buckled into his carseat, and the familiarity may make it easier for him to sit still and even sleep. This only works though when your child is able to fit comfortably in the tight seat compartments. A toddler with long legs will be scrunched between his seat and the seat in front of him. The added benefit of bringing a car seat when you can, is the safety feature of having your child in a protective seat on the airplane. Make sure your carseat bears a sticker that says it's FAA approved for air travel, so that it's not turned away at the gate. You'll need that seat anyway to get to and from the airport at home and at your destination. (Carseat rentals are typically expensive, and availability is often limited.)
- Visit your baby's pediatrician a week or two before your trip to be sure your little one isn't harboring an ear infection or other illness. If possible, avoid exposing your child to other children the week before the flight so he's less likely to catch one of those many kid-carried bugs.
- If you will be visiting relatives at your destination, make a family photo album and "introduce" your baby to these new people via their pictures prior to the actual meeting.
- If your baby will be taking any medication on the day of the trip (such as a decongestant or pain reliever), be sure to test it out *before* the day of travel to gauge any side effects.
- Decide if you'll need a stroller at your destination. If you don't think you'll need a conventional one, at least consider bringing a lightweight portable type for use in airports; this will give you a free hand as you tend to tasks such as luggage check-in and pickup, while keeping your child safe and close by. If you opt to take your regular stroller, you can usually check it at the gate or right at the door of the airplane.
- Alternatively, a sling or soft-pack carrier can be very helpful if your child still likes to be carried and is light enough for you to carry this way for long walks through the airport.
- Dress yourself and your child in comfortable layers of clothing. Airplanes are often cramped and hot, but sometimes too cold.
- Use these checklists (and make lists of your own) to ensure that you don't forget anything.

### **Packing your carry-on**

The right carry-on bag can be a lifesaver. Make sure that your bag is easy to lift or roll, and that it falls within the airline's size limitations. Pack an organized bag that carries:

- Lots of diapers. Plan for an unexpected layover or delay.
- A baby blanket, which is good for multiple uses.
- A diaper-changing pad in case you end up changing your baby on the floor or on a dirty changing table.
- Plenty of snacks. Often the only snacks on airplanes are peanuts, which are a major choking hazard for babies. Also, snacks are a great distraction for a bored or antsy child. Even if you've ordered a child's meal, it might show up when your child is asleep or isn't hungry, or your child may not like the menu. A few ideas for easy-to-tote snacks include:

- Baby food
  - Dry cereal
  - Pretzels
  - Crackers
  - Bagels
  - Bread or rolls
  - Dried fruit
  - Lollipops
- Drinks. Bring along favorites in a sippy cup, drink-box, or bottle. You may even want to pack these in a soft lunchbox cooler.
  - Infant pain reliever in case of ear pain or other discomfort. (But don't try anything new; make sure it's something your baby has tolerated well already.)
  - Lots of new toys, or old favorites that have been hidden for a few weeks. Avoid noisy toys that will annoy fellow passengers. Great travel toys include:
    - Crayons and a small pad or sticky notes
    - Stickers and sticker books (Sticker books have the advantage here; their stickers are reusable if stuck on their specially surfaced pages, whereas a sticker placed on paper is there for good — which is fine, too, but a sticker book prolongs the activity.)
    - Building toys like Legos™ or Duplos™
    - Paperback books
    - Puppets
    - Tiny plastic animals, cars, or dolls
    - Playing cards (Go Fish or other games that feature interesting cards)
    - Tape or CD player with kid music or books on tape
  - Bib
  - Extra pacifiers, or your baby's lovey, special blanket, or toy
  - A book, magazine, or activity for you when baby is sleeping or playing, should you be lucky enough for that to occur!
  - A small medical kit with bandages
  - Wet wipes for diaper changes and cleaning baby's hands and face
  - Empty plastic bags for soiled diapers
  - If your baby uses a bottle, bring several. It's usually easier to take along premeasured powdered formula and small bottles of water for mixing.
  - A complete change of clothes for baby and an extra shirt for you (spitup and spills happen).
  - Toothbrush and toothpaste for unexpected layovers.
  - If you're traveling as two adults with two children, divide up the children's supplies into two separate bags in case your seats are separated on the airplane.
  - Consider packing toys in a small child's backpack for any child old enough to carry one.

- A small belt-bag (fanny pack) is handy for tickets, ID, and cash. Wear it on the front of your body, not the back.
- Test your bag in advance to be sure it's not too heavy!

### **The night before the trip**

- Get a good night's sleep so that you can be more relaxed during your trip.
- Pack all of your bags and put them in the car or near the front door so you're not scrambling when it's time to leave.
- Review your checklists.

### **At the airport**

- Get to the airport early.
- Check as many pieces of luggage as possible. Avoid overloading yourself with things to carry.
- Keep in mind that most airport rental carts have to be unloaded to go through security, and that your child may have to be taken out of the stroller or backpack when you go through the metal detector.
- When you check in, tell the desk attendant that you are traveling with a baby. Let her know if you have a stroller or carseat with you.
- Change your baby's diaper immediately before boarding the airplane.
- Avoid breastfeeding or bottle-feeding your baby just before boarding as he may fall asleep and wake up crying as you struggle to carry him and your belongings to the gate. Wait until you are seated and unloaded, then feed him and maybe you'll be lucky and he'll take a nap!
- Avoid feeding your little one just prior to boarding. Save food and drink for when you're on the airplane, as these carry great entertainment value.
- Consider bringing your stroller and checking it at the gate. This way you can carry baby, the carseat, and all your belongings right up to the airplane gangway. Smaller strollers can be brought on as carry-ons, and an attendant will take bigger strollers as gate-checked items. (Find out where to retrieve these.)
- If traveling with two adults and multiple children, ask at the desk if one adult can do the early-boarding and set up your carry-on bags and carseat(s). Usually the pre-boarding time is extremely short, and you'll have to rush to get the carseat secured and carry-on items organized before all the other passengers begin to board. This will also allow your little ones some last-minute exercise before boarding with the second adult.
- If you have a connecting flight, go straight to the gate upon landing. Sometimes it takes longer to get gate-to-gate than you expect. Any waiting time is best done closer to your next gate.

### **On the airplane**

- To help your baby's ears adjust to changes in cabin pressure, encourage swallowing during takeoff and landing. You can do this by breastfeeding, or offering a bottle or pacifier. Toddlers can take a drink, nibble on crackers, or suck on a lollipop. (Look for those without a gum or chewy center,

which can present a choking hazard.) Use the feeling in your own ears to determine when to give your baby something to swallow, or feed your baby when you see the flight attendants preparing the cabin for takeoff or landing. If your baby is sleeping soundly, don't feel you need to awaken him; he'll be fine.

- Flying in an airplane can cause dehydration, which occurs much more quickly in a child than with an adult. Keep your baby well hydrated with water, juice, or milk.
- Changing diapers can be a real challenge. Some airplanes have changing tables, but these are typically very small, and while great for newborns a tricky challenge for bigger babies. You can ask the flight attendant for the best place for changing. A small baby can be changed on your lap on or the pull-down tray table. (Be sensitive to the people seated near you if you do this.) Some airlines will allow you to use the flight attendant's jump-seat; some will let you change your baby on the floor near the galley or in the bulkhead area. If you have an older baby, consider using pull-up disposable diapers on the flight, as these can be pulled up with your little one standing. Use a plastic bag from home or the airsickness bag for disposal in the bathroom trash. Remember that, since flight attendants handle food, they can't handle dirty diapers. (And they probably don't want to, either.)
- The flight attendant will usually heat a bottle for you. Be sure that you shake it well and test it thoroughly, as the galley system often makes things very hot.
- If your baby is unhappy and begins to cry, take a deep breath and focus your attention on your baby. Fellow passengers who are unhappy about the disruption may forget that you have as much right to be on the airplane as they do. They also may not know, or may forget how difficult it is for a baby or young child to be patient during a long flight. Your best defense against an unpleasant stranger is to say with a smile, "I'm doing the best I can." And then tend to your baby.
- Unless you have to, don't rush off the plane. Let your child play until most of the passengers have disembarked. This will prevent you from standing in the slow-moving line in the aisle while carrying an armload of luggage and trying to keep your baby happy.

### **International travel**

- If only one parent is traveling, make sure you bring a letter of permission from the other parent. This should be signed and assert that the parent gives permission for the child to leave the country. You may not need this, but it's an easy document to bring along just in case.
- Get passports for all travelers. It's easy to obtain a passport for a baby. Passport application forms and instructions are available at your local post office. Plan ahead though, as this can take weeks to obtain the passport after making application.
- Take advantage of the room available in a larger airplane by taking your baby for walks when it's safe to move about the cabin.

### **At your destination**

- Determine in advance where your baby will sleep, and find out if you can rent or borrow a crib, if you need one. If you plan to co-sleep you may need to move the furniture around, or even pull the mattress off the bed to make a safe sleeping situation. (Most hotel housekeeping staff will help with this if you ask politely.) Other equipment such as carseat, stroller, highchair, and safety gates often can be rented or borrowed.

- Find out if your brands of diapers and formula are available at your destination. If not, send a box ahead of time.
- Ask if your accommodations have been childproofed. If not, bring along some outlet protectors and a roll of duct tape for on-the-spot childproofing.
- Pack a child-safe nightlight to make those middle-of-the-night potty runs and diaper changes safe.
- Make sure that the vehicle you'll be picked up in or that you are renting has enough seatbelts for everyone, plus room for luggage and your stroller.
- Upon arrival, you might want to collect your luggage and then send one adult for the car while the other stays at the curb with the bags and children.
- Remember to keep your carry-on bag organized, including snacks, for your return flight home.

### **For the frequent flier**

Make a master list of those items you typically take along. Be sure to include those you're more apt to forget. Keep your list on your computer, if you have one, so it's ready to print out when it's time to pack.

## Choosing Toys for Babies

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

You may not be sure what kind of toys, or how many, you baby should have. It's likely that you hear conflicting advice that runs from one extreme to another! It's either: "Don't give your baby toys — he'll be spoiled," to "Give your baby lots of toys — they develop his brain." So...which is it?

Both sides of this debate have valid points. A baby does indeed learn from the things she plays with, and the more things she has access to, the more she can learn. With this in mind, many parents spend a fortune buying toys; however, many toys hold a child's attention for three or four days, only to be relegated to the bottom of the toybox or back of a shelf.

Babies learn about their world by using all five of their senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Toys engage and refine these senses by:

- Helping your baby learn how to control his movements and body parts
- Helping your baby figure out how things work
- Showing your baby how he can control things in his world
- Teaching your baby new ideas
- Building your baby's muscle control, coordination, and strength
- Teaching your baby how to use his imagination
- Showing your baby how to solve simple problems
- Helping your baby learn how to play by himself
- Setting the foundation for learning how to share and cooperate with others

Experts agree that babies need a variety of toys to enrich their lives and encourage learning. While your baby can learn from expensive store-bought toys, she can also learn from a crumpled piece of paper, a set of measuring spoons, an empty box, or a leaf. Everything is new and interesting to a baby, and if you open your eyes to the many wonders in our world, you'll see that you don't have to spend a fortune to keep your baby happy, interested, and learning.

### What "home-grown" toys are best?

As you view the whole world as a bottomless toybox, here are some tips to consider:

- Search for items of different weights, materials, textures, flexibility, sizes, shapes, colors, and smells. (Most store-bought baby toys are primary-colored plastic; that's why your metal keys on a leather key ring are so very appealing — they're different!)
- Babies are generalists. Your little one will apply what he learns from one object to any other that is similar. Therefore, don't give him an old book or magazine to scribble in unless you want *all* of your books to be potential notepads. A sealed bottle may look fun, but your baby may then think he can play with your pill bottles.
- Take a closer look at the things you consider "trash." Some may be valuable toys! Empty boxes, egg cartons, and tin containers are just a few examples of everyday castoffs that, once cleaned, can provide endless hours of play.

#### **PARENT TIP**

"I made a great set of blocks for my daughter by collecting an assortment of empty boxes from regular household products and covering them with contact paper. They are colorful, light weight and man interesting shapes and sizes."

Yu-ting, mother of Shu-Lin (3 years old)

- Your kitchen is overflowing with baby toys! Once your little one begins to crawl, it's time to rearrange the kitchen. Put all your baby-safe items, such as plastic containers, pots and pans, potholders and canned goods, in your lower cabinets and let your baby know where his "toys" are. You'll have to relax your housekeeping standards and deal with disorganized cabinets for a while, but the play potential is so fantastic that it's worth it!
- Young children love water play, and a bowl or pan of water along with spoons and cups of various sizes make a fabulous source of fun. You can put your baby in his high chair, sit him on the floor on a beach towel, or take him outside in a shady spot if the weather's warm. I guarantee he'll be soaked when he's done, but that will be after a very long and happy play session.
  - Containers to fill and empty are lots of fun for a baby. You can safely fulfill your older baby's desire to manipulate small things by filling a large bowl with a variety of colorful children's cereals (nothing hard or ball-shaped) and supplying spoons, measuring cups, and other containers. Since you're using cereal pieces, it's okay if some end up in his mouth. *Don't* try this with beads, seeds, macaroni, or other items that pose a choking hazard.

### **What store-bought toys are best?**

A while ago, I went to the toy store to buy my youngest child, Coleton, a toy that my older three adored when they were babies. It was a simple pop-up toy for toddlers with various buttons, levers, and dials. I found a bewildering variety of this kind of toy, but to my dismay, every single one was electronic. They made sounds, they made music, they had blinking lights — they just about played by themselves! I finally had to order the prized toy from a specialty catalog that carries "back to basics" toys. Sure, electronic toys can be exciting — for a while — but they can also stunt your baby's developing ability to imagine and manipulate (and let's face it: those repetitive electronic sounds can get annoying). If a toy does everything by itself, it loses its potential as a tool for developing creativity. Also, if your little one gets used to these toys, then simple pleasures like wooden blocks seem boring by comparison because he expects the blocks to play *for* him. And those simple toys are among the very best for baby playtime.

Look for these qualities as you shop for your baby:

- Long-term play value: Will this hold your little one's attention for more than a few weeks?
- Durability: Will it hold up when sat on, thrown, jumped on, mouthed, or banged?
- Solid simplicity: Babies don't need complicated toys.
- Challenge: Look for toys that teach but do not frustrate.
- Appropriateness. Does it match your baby's thinking, language, and motor skills?
- Interest: Will it encourage your baby to think?
- Stimulation: How does this toy foster creativity and imagination?
- Interactiveness: Does it engage your child or just entertain him as he watches passively?
- Versatility: Can your baby play with this in more than one way?
- Washability: Well-loved toys tend to get very dirty!
- Fit with your family value system: Does this toy reflect your family's particular values? For example, is the toy friendly to the environment? Does it promote diversity? Are you comfortable with what the toy represents?
- Novelty: Is this toy different from others your baby already has? You don't want a toy box filled with 30 different kinds of rattles!
- Fun appeal: Is it something that *you* will enjoy playing with, too? Toys that encourage you to play along with your baby are ideal.

### **Best toys for young babies:**

Board books  
 Foot or hand puppets  
 Musical toys  
 Rattles  
 Small, lightweight, easy-to-grasp toys  
 Squeaky toys

Teething rings

Toys with high-contrast graphics, bright colors, or black-and-white patterns

### **Best toys for older babies:**

Activity boxes (levers/buttons/dials/hinges)

Balls

Beginning puzzles (two or three large pieces; knobs are helpful)

Blocks

Cars and trucks

Chunky small people and accessories

Dolls and stuffed animals

Hammering toys

Large interlocking beads

Modeling dough

Musical toys

Nesting cups

Peg boards

Picture books

Plastic animals

Pop-up toys

Push or pull toys

Shape sorters

Stacking rings

Toy versions of everyday items (telephones, cooking utensils, doctor kits)

Toys you still remember from your childhood (The classics endure and are always a good bet!)

Washable crayons or markers and blank paper

### **Playtime**

As you give your baby new things to play with, keep in mind that there is no right way to play with toys. For example, a puzzle is not always for “puzzling.” The pieces make great manipulative characters, can be sorted or put in boxes, and make interesting noises when banged together or against an empty pot. Children learn through play, so any toy they enjoy playing with is, by definition, educational.

### **Safety for all toys**

Always consider well the safety aspects of *anything* your baby is going to play with. Here are a few ways to keep playtime safe:

- Discard any plastic wrapping, plastic bags, packaging, or tags before giving a toy to a baby.
- Always watch for choking hazards. Anything small enough to fit in your baby’s mouth has the potential for danger. Watch for pieces that may become loose from a larger object, too. Make sure that no small parts can be pulled off or chewed off the toy.
- Check the paint or finish on the toy to make sure it is non-toxic, since babies put everything in their mouths.
- Check toys for sharp points, rough edges, rust, and broken parts.
- Always abide by the age rating on the package. No matter how smart your child is or how wonderful the toy, don't second-guess the manufacturer, since age rankings often are given due to safety issues. If you choose to purchase a toy with an older age recommendation, make certain that the toy is used only when you are playing with your baby, and that it is

stored where your baby can't get to it without your supervision.

- Remove rattles, squeeze toys, teething toys, stuffed animals, and other small toys from the crib or bed when your baby goes to sleep for naps or bedtime. The exception here is a specialty made-for-baby toy that has been carefully created to be a safe sleeping lovey.
- Avoid pull toys with long cords that could wind around your baby's neck. Pull toys for babies should have either very short strings or rigid handles.
- Make sure toys are properly assembled, with no loose parts.
- Beware of excessively loud toys. Babies tend to hold things close to their faces, and you want to protect your baby's sensitive ears.
- Buy mobiles or crib toys from reputable manufacturers, and make sure that they attach to the crib without dangling strings. Remove mobiles and other crib toys once your baby can sit up.
- Make sure that toys are never left on stairs, in doorways, or in walkways.
- Your baby's toybox should have a special safety lid (or no lid at all) to prevent it from slamming on your baby's head or hands, or trapping your baby inside. There shouldn't be any hinges that could pinch little fingers.
- Never give a baby a balloon, Styrofoam, or plastic wrap as a toy; these present a serious choking hazard, since they cannot be expelled using the Heimlich maneuver.
- If a toy is second-hand (whether purchased from a second-hand store or garage sale, or given to you by a friend or relative), give all of the above rules extra consideration. If you have any doubts, always err on the side of safety and discard the toy. Don't let your baby play with a paint-finished toy that appears to be older than a few years — the paint may be lead-based, which poses serious hazards to a baby who touches or mouths it.
- Keep toys (and parts of toys) designed for older children out of the hands of babies. Your baby may like to play with toys belonging to an older sibling or friend, but these are geared, safety-wise, to older kids and are not safe for little ones to use without very close supervision.

## Stop the Diaper Changing Battles

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

Babies are little bundles of energy! They don't want to lie still to have their diapers changed. They cry, fuss, or even crawl away. A simple issue can turn into a major tug-of-war between parent and baby.

### **Diaper changing as a ritual**

The position of parent and baby during a diaper change is perfect for creating a bonding experience between you. You are leaning over your baby, and your face is at the perfect arms-length distance for engaging eye contact and communication. What's more, this golden opportunity presents itself many times during each day; no matter how busy you both get, you have a few moments of quiet connection. It's too valuable a ritual to treat it as simply maintenance.

### **Learning about your baby**

Diapering offers a perfect opportunity for you to truly absorb your baby's cues and signals. You'll learn how his little body works, what tickles him, what causes those tiny goose bumps. As you lift, move, and touch your baby, your hands will learn the map of his body and what's normal for him. This is important because it will enable you to easily decipher any physical changes that need attention.

### **Developing trust**

Regular diaper changes create rhythm in your baby's world and afford the sense that the world is safe and dependable. They are regular and consistent episodes in days that may not always be predictable. Your loving touches teach your baby that he is valued, and your gentle care teaches him that he is respected.

### **A learning experience for your baby**

Your baby does a lot of learning during diaper changes. It's one of the few times that she actually sees her own body without clothes, when she can feel her complete movements without a wad of diaper between her legs. Diaper-off time is a great chance for her to stretch her limbs and learn how they move. During changing time, your baby is also a captive audience to your voice, so she can focus on what you are saying and how you are saying it — an important component of her language learning process. Likewise, for a precious few minutes, *you* are *her* captive audience, so you can focus on what *she's* saying and how she is saying it — crucial to the growth of your relationship.

### **What your baby thinks and feels**

Many active babies could not care less if their diapers are clean. They're too busy to concern themselves with such trivial issues. It may be important to you, but it's not a priority for your child. Diaper rash or uncomfortable diapers (wrong size or bad fit) can make him dread diaper changes, so check these first. Once you're sure all the practical issues are covered, make a few adjustments in this unavoidable process to make it more enjoyable.

### **Take a deep breath**

Given the number of diapers you have to change, it's possible that what used to be a pleasant experience for you has gotten to be routine, or even worse, a hassle. When parents approach diaper changing in a brisk, no-nonsense way, it isn't any fun for Baby. Try to reconnect with the bonding experience that diaper changing can be -- a moment of calm in a busy day when you share one-on-one time with your baby.

### **Have some fun**

This is a great time to sing songs, blow tummy raspberries, or do some tickle and play. A little fun might take the dread out of diaper changes for both of you. A game that stays fresh for a long time is "hide the diaper." Put a new diaper on your head, on your shoulder, or tucked in your shirt and ask, "Where's the diaper? I can't find it!" A fun twist is to give the diaper a name and a silly voice, and use it as a puppet. Let the diaper call your child to the changing station and have it talk to him as you change it. (If you get tired of making Mister Diaper talk, just remember what it was like before you tried the idea.)

**Use distraction**

Keep a flashlight with your changing supplies and let your baby play with it while you change him. Some kids' flashlights have a button to change the color of the light, or shape of the ray. Call this his "diaper flashlight" and put it away when the change is complete. You may find a different type of special toy that appeals to your little one, or even a basket of small interesting toys. If you reserve these only for diaper time, they can retain their novelty for a long time.

**Try a stand-up diaper**

If your baby's diaper is just wet (not messy), try letting her stand up while you do a quick change. If you're using cloth diapers, have one leg pre-pinned so that you can slide it on like pants, or opt for pre-fitted diapers that don't require pins.

**Time to potty train?**

If your child is old enough and seems ready for the next step, consider potty training.

## Going Visiting With Your Baby

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

Babies love new places! There's so much to investigate and new things to touch. But many people aren't too happy to have your little one crawling or toddling freely about the house exploring everything in sight. While you think its adorable that Baby found the Tupperware, your host may not think it's cute that her tidy cabinet has been rearranged by sticky baby hands. If your host has a big heart she'll let you know that your baby's exploring is okay. But even then, you run the risk of your baby breaking or losing something.

### **Bring toys!**

The best thing you can do is bring along a bag of toys to seize your child's attention. You can purchase new items, or dig through your baby's toy box to put together a collection of forgotten favorites. Avoid bringing loud toys that may annoy others, and bring toys that will hold your baby's attention for a long time.

### **Bring your own supplies**

Think about things that keep your baby happy at home or in the car, and bring these with you, such as your sling, a favorite blanket, a Boppy pillow, or a special lovey. If you are prepared, then your baby will be more content.

### **Safety issues**

Visits with a mobile baby are tricky, especially if you're at a home that isn't childproof. If you want to avoid physically shadowing your baby around the house, bring a few safety tools, such as outlet plugs and a folding baby gate to section off stairways. When you arrive, assess the area and ask if chemicals, medications, or fragile vases can be put away during your visit. Remember that you're certain to miss some hazards, so keep a close eye on Baby during your entire visit.

### **Food and eating**

Whether your baby is new to solid food or has been eating it for a while, bring along a few favorites. If you don't bring snacks with you, your baby may not touch the dinner that's served and may cry for her favorite crackers. In any case, don't feel you must push your baby to try something new to the point of a temper tantrum. Politely requesting something simple like toast or cheese is perfectly okay and will be welcomed more than a loud and tense test of parent/child wills.

### **What if you're breastfeeding and your baby is hungry?**

Do what comes naturally: Feed him! Breastfeeding is the most natural way to feed a baby. If your hosts aren't used to seeing a mother breastfeed, then you're doing our world a favor by introducing one more person to the beauty of baby feeding. Be thoughtful about other's sensitivities. This doesn't mean you need to hide, but your efforts to be discreet are a courtesy for those around you and may help others feel more comfortable about seeing you breastfeeding your baby. Using a sling, blanket or nursing shirt are easy ways to accomplish this.

### **Changing Diapers**

Bring a changing pad; this will protect the surface you're using. If you don't have a pad, ask for a towel. Ask where your host prefers that you change the baby, or suggest a location: "Do you mind if I lay the towel on your bed to change the baby?"

Bring along (or ask to use) plastic bags to store messy diapers. Make sure that they are sealed so that they don't create odors. If you use disposables, put used diapers in a sealed bag and offer to take them out to the trash. People don't like stinky diapers in their bathroom trash.

### **Sleeping and napping**

If your little one sleeps in a cradle or crib you may want to bring along a portable crib. If you don't have one, or if you co-sleep at home, this is a time when "anything goes." If your baby will sleep in your arms, then go ahead and enjoy an in-arms nap. If your baby is flexible, put a blanket on the floor and set up a sleeping nest. Don't leave Baby alone, since the area probably isn't childproof.

A great nap solution is to bring your car seat into the house and strap your baby in securely, or fashion a bed from a large box or an empty dresser drawer. Keep your baby close by or check on her frequently.

For co-sleepers, your first order of business is to create a safe sleeping place. Inspect the furniture placement in the bedroom. If you know that pushing the bed against the wall would make the situation safer for your baby, then politely explain to your host. Let her know that you'll move it back before you leave (and then remember to do so).

**Be prepared for anything**

Life with a baby is filled with surprises. Take a deep breath, and do your best to keep your baby content....and if things don't go as well as you'd hoped, remind yourself that "This too shall pass."

**Show your appreciation**

If you've had an overnight stay, if your host is helpful, or if you made special requests during your stay, remember to send a thank you note that expresses your appreciation.

## Solving Naptime Problems

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Napping is an important element of your child's healthy mental and physical growth. A daily nap refreshes a child so that she can maintain her energy, focus, and ability to learn for the rest of the day. Some studies even show that children who nap every day are more flexible and adaptable, have longer attention spans and are less fussy than those who don't nap.

### How can you tell if your child needs a nap?

Here are some of the signs that your child needs a daily nap:

- Wakes up in a good mood, but gets whiny and cranky as the day progresses
- Has more patience early in the day, but is easily aggravated later on
- Cries more easily in the afternoon and evening than earlier in the day
- Has an afternoon or early evening slump, but gets a second wind afterwards
- Yawns, rubs eyes, or fusses while getting ready for bed
- Often falls asleep in the car or when watching a movie

### How much naptime does your child need?

Children differ in their sleep needs, some needing more or less than shown here — but what follows is a general guide that applies to most of them. Even if your child's sleep hours add up to the right amount, his or her behavior tells you more than any chart possibly could. When in doubt – always try for a nap, since even a period of quiet time can help a child feel more refreshed.

#### Average hours of daytime and nighttime sleep

Age	Number of naps	Total length of naptime hours	Nighttime sleep hours**	Total of nighttime and naptime sleep
Newborn*				
3 months	3	5 – 6	10 – 11	15
6 months	2	3 – 4	10 - 11	14 – 15
9 months	2	2 ½ - 4	11 - 12	14
12 months	1–2	2 – 3	11 ½ –12	13 ½ –14
18 months	1–2	2 – 3	11 ¼ -12	13 – 14
2 years	1	1–2 ½	11–12	13 – 13 ½
2 ½ years	1	1 ½ -2	11–11 ½	13 – 13 ½
3 years	1	1–1 ½	11 –11 ½	12 – 13
4 years	0 -1	0 -1	11–11 ½	11 – 12 ½
5-6 years	0 -1	0 -1	11	11 – 12

\*Newborns sleep 16-18 hours daily, spread over 6-7 sleep periods. \*\* These averages don't signify unbroken stretches of sleep.

© Elizabeth Pantley, *The No-Cry Sleep Solution* and *The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Toddlers & Preschoolers* (McGraw-Hill)

### When should your child nap?

The timing of your child's naps is important since a nap that occurs too late in the day will prevent your child from being tired at bedtime. Generally, the best nap times are:

- If your child takes two naps: midmorning (around 9:00 to 11:00) and early afternoon (around 12:00 to 2:30)

- If your child takes one nap: early afternoon (around 12:00 to 2:30); after lunch

If your child tends towards short naps, don't give in and assume that it's all the nap time that she needs. Try some of these tips for increasing the length of naps:

- Give your child lunch or a snack a half hour before nap.
- Keep the sleeping room dark.
- Play soothing music or white noise during the entire nap.
- Make certain that discomfort from teething, allergies, asthma, ear infection or other health issues aren't preventing your child from taking a good nap. If you suspect any of these, schedule a visit to your health care professional.

### **Watch for signs of tiredness**

Tired children fall asleep easily. If he isn't tired he'll resist sleep, but if you miss his signals, he can become *overtired* and be unable to fall asleep when you finally do put him to bed. Your child may demonstrate one or more of these signs that tell you he is tired and ready to nap - *now*:

- losing interest in playtime
- rubbing his eyes
- looking glazed or unfocused
- becoming whiny, cranky or fussy
- losing patience with toys, activities or playmates
- having tantrums
- yawning
- lying down or slumping in his seat
- caressing a lovey or blanket
- asking for a pacifier, bottle or to nurse

### **The nap routine**

Once you have created a nap schedule that works with your child's daily periods of tiredness, follow a simple but specific nap routine. Your child will be most comfortable if there is a pattern to his day. He may come to predict when his naptime approaches and willingly cooperate with you.

### **Nap routines change**

Children's sleep needs change over time, so remember that the routine that you set up today won't be the same one you're using a year from now. Be adaptable!

## Taking a Road Trip with Your Baby

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of Gentle Baby Care

To Grandmother's house we go! And you'll be in the car for five whole hours — how can you make the trip enjoyable with a baby along?

### Learn about it

There's no question: Marathon car trips with a baby on board take a good amount of planning and organization. But it can be done — and yes, it can even be fun!

### Planning the trip

In the hustle that precedes a trip, it can be easy to *let* things happen, instead of *make* things happen. Be proactive in making your trip decisions. Contemplating these questions, and coming up with the right answers, can help make your trip more successful:

- Does your baby sleep well in the car? If yes, plan your travel time to coincide with a nap or bedtime so your baby can sleep through part of the journey. If not, plan to leave immediately after a nap or upon waking in the morning. Don't fool yourself into thinking your baby will behave differently than usual in the car just because it's a special occasion.
- Is it necessary to make the trip all at once, or can you break it up with stops along the way? The longer your baby is strapped in the carseat, the more likely he'll become fussy. Planning a few breaks can keep everyone in a better frame of mind.
- When estimating an arrival time, have you factored in plenty of extra time for unplanned surprises? A diaper explosion that requires a complete change of clothes or a baby whose inconsolable crying requires an unexpected 20-minute stop are just two of the things that can easily happen.
- Do you have everything you need to make the trip pleasant? Items like:
  - Window shades to protect your baby from the sun and create a darker, nap-inducing atmosphere.
  - A cooler for cold drinks; a bottle warmer if needed
  - Plenty of toys that are new or forgotten favorites saved just for the trip
  - Baby-friendly music on tape or CD
  - A rear-view baby mirror to keep on eye on baby (unless a second person will be sitting with your little one)
  - Books to read to your baby

### Preparing the car

Take plenty of time to get the car ready for your trip. If two adults are traveling, consider yourself lucky and arrange for one person to sit in the backseat next to the baby. If you are traveling alone with your little one, you'll need to be more creative in setting up the car, and you'll need to plan for more frequent stops along the way.

Here are a few tips for making the car a traveling entertainment center for your baby:

- Use ribbon or yarn and safety pins or tape to hang an array of lightweight toys from the ceiling of the car to hang over your baby. An alternative is to string a line from one side of the car to the other with an array of toys attached by ribbons. Bring along an assortment of new toys that can be exchanged when you stop the car for a rest. Just be sure to use small toys and keep them out of the driver's line of view.
- Tape brightly colored pictures of toys on the back of the seat that your baby will be facing.
- If no one will be sitting next to your baby and your child is old enough to reach for toys, set up an upside-down box next to the car seat with a shallow box or a tray with ledges on top of it. Fill this

with toys that your baby can reach for by himself. You might also shop around for a baby activity center that attaches directly to the carseat.

- If you plan to have someone sitting next to baby, then provide that person with a gigantic box of toys with which to entertain the little one — distraction works wonders to keep a baby happy in the car. One of the best activities for long car rides is book reading. Check your library's early reading section; it typically features a large collection of baby-pleasing titles in paperback that are easier to tote along than board books.
- Bring along an assortment of snacks and drinks for your older baby who's regularly eating solids, and remember to bring food for yourself, too. Even if you plan to stop for meals, you may decide to drive on through if your baby is sleeping or content — saving the stops for fussy times.
- Bring books on tape or quiet music for the adults for times when your baby is sleeping. The voice on tape may help keep your baby relaxed, and it will be something you can enjoy.
- If you'll be traveling in the dark, bring along a battery-operated nightlight or flashlight.

### **Car travel checklist**

- Well-stocked diaper bag
- Baby's blanket
- Carseat pillow or head support
- Window shades (sun screens)
- Change of clothes for your baby
- Enormous box of toys and books
- Music or books on tape or CDs
- Baby food, snacks, and drinks for your baby
- Sipper cups
- Snacks and drinks for the adults
- Cooler
- Wet washcloths in bags, or moist towelettes
- Empty plastic bags for leftovers and trash
- Bottle warmer
- Cell phone
- Baby's regular sleep music or white noise (if needed, bring extra batteries)
- First aid kit/prescriptions/medications
- Jumper cables
- Money/wallet/purse/ID
- Medical and insurance information/emergency phone numbers
- Maps/driving directions
- Baby carrier/sling/stroller
- Camera and film
- Suitcases

### **During the journey**

If you've carefully planned your trip and prepared your vehicle, you've already started out on the right foot. Now keep these things in mind as you make your way down the road:

- Be flexible. When traveling with a baby, even the best-laid plans can be disrupted. Try to stay relaxed, accept changes, and go with the flow.
- Stop when you need to. Trying to push "just a little farther" with a crying baby in the car can be dangerous, as you're distracted and nervous. Take the time to stop and calm your baby.

- Put safety first. Make sure that you keep your baby in his carseat. Many nursing mothers breastfeed their babies during trips. This can be dangerous in a moving car, even if you are both securely belted: You can't foresee an accident, and your body could slam forcefully into your baby. Instead, pull over and nurse your baby while he's still in his carseat. That way, when he falls asleep, you won't wake him up moving him back into his seat.
- Remember: *Never, ever leave your baby alone in the car ¾ not even for a minute.*

### **On the way home**

You may be so relieved that you lived through your trip that you sort of forget the other trip ahead of you: the trip home. You'll need to organize the trip home as well as you did the trip out. A few days in advance, make certain that all your supplies are refilled and ready to go. Think about the best time to leave, and plan accordingly. In addition, think about what you learned on the trip to your destination that might make the trip home even easier. Is there something you wish you would have had but didn't? Something you felt you could have done differently? Did you find yourself saying, "I wish we would have..."? Now's the time to make any adjustments to your original travel plan so that your trip back home is pleasant and relaxed.

## Postpartum Depression

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Gentle Baby Care* and *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

**QUESTION:** I know that it's normal to have the "baby blues" right after you have a baby, but my son is six weeks old. I thought everything would be wonderful by now and I would be so in love with my baby. I thought mothering would come easily. It's not that way at all! I can't sleep, even when he's sleeping. I feel hollow inside, like the real me is gone. Sometimes I cry for hours; other times, I feel angry enough to explode. Life feels like an endless amusement park ride, and sometimes I just want to get off. Why am I such a terrible mother?

### Learn about it

You're *not* a terrible mother! You are a mother who is suffering from a condition known as postpartum depression, a condition that is treatable. While as many as 80% of mothers experience a temporary and mild condition referred to as the baby blues, up to 15% of women have the more severe reaction you're experiencing. Having PPD doesn't mean that you have done something wrong, or that something is wrong with you; it is an illness and it can be cured. Once you learn more about what's causing your despondent emotions and take some steps toward treatment, you'll be on the road to finding yourself again and enjoying your baby.

### What is postpartum depression?

PPD is a medical condition — a specific type of depression that occurs within the first few months after childbirth. It is caused by the biochemical and hormonal changes that happen in the body after pregnancy and birth...nothing that is within your control.

### What are the symptoms of postpartum depression?

While PPD affects all women differently, a few typical symptoms can help your physician make the diagnosis. You probably are not experiencing *everything* on the following list, and the degree of symptoms may range from mild to severe, but if a number of these apply to you, you may be suffering from PPD.

Symptoms of postpartum depression may include but are not limited to:

- Feeling hopeless, worthless or inadequate
- Frequent crying or tearfulness
- Insomnia or sleepiness
- Lack of energy
- Loss of pleasure in activities you normally enjoy
- Difficulty doing typical daily chores
- Loss of appetite
- Feelings of sadness and despair
- Feelings of guilt, panic or confusion
- Feelings of anger or anxiety
- Extreme mood swings
- Memory loss
- Overconcern for baby
- Fear of "losing control"
- Lack of interest in sex
- Worrying that you may hurt your baby
- A desire to escape from your baby or your family
- Withdrawal from social circles and routines
- Thoughts about hurting yourself

If you suffer from extreme degrees of any of these symptoms, particularly thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby, or if you have additional physical symptoms such as hallucinations, confusion or paranoia, then please call a doctor today. *NOW*. Your condition requires immediate medical care. If you can't make the call, then please talk to your partner, your mother or father, a sibling or close friend and ask them to help you arrange for help. Do this for yourself and for your baby. If you can't talk about it, rip this page out and hand it to someone close to you. It's that important. *You do not have to feel this way.*

### **What can a doctor do about postpartum depression?**

As with any form of depression, help is available and only as far away as your healthcare provider — contact your ob/gyn or midwife to start with, if that's most comfortable for you. She can help you get the professional care you need from someone who has experience dealing with this condition. In the longer term, it's important that your therapy take place with a professional who has experience in treating PPD; the malady is different from other forms of depression, and it is very specifically related to your role as a new mother.

#### **PARENT TIP**

"In the time it takes you to read this chapter, you could set up an appointment with a doctor. Remember, this is a medical problem and it can be serious; for your sake, for your baby, and for all those who love you, you must make that call. With help, you will regain your life and your perspective."

- Vanessa, mother of Kimmy (12) Tyler (10) Rachel (5) and Zachary (3)

A visit to a doctor for the symptoms you're feeling is nothing to fear. Your condition is something your doctor has seen before — so you need not feel at all self-conscious. As for treatment, there are a variety of options, depending on how severe your symptoms are. Your doctor will evaluate your condition and may suggest medication, such as antidepressants. (Make sure that you let him know if you are breastfeeding so that the proper medication can be prescribed.) In addition, he will tell you that therapy and support are critical for recovery.

### **What can I do about PPD?**

The first step you can take is to understand that you have an illness that requires action on your part so you can heal. Forgive me for repeating this, but it is important: Take that first step and call a doctor. In addition, the following things can help you begin to feel better right away:

**Talk to someone.** Whom do you trust? Whom do you feel comfortable talking to? This might be your spouse or partner, it might be your mother, your sister or brother or a friend. It can really help to share your feelings with someone who cares about you. Even if you feel you can't talk specifically about PPD, just discuss your feelings and your new role as a mother and its effects on you.

**Read books about baby care and parenting.** Knowledge is power. Reading may help you feel more confident, which in turn will help you feel more in control of your situation. It will also give you the knowledge you'll need to ward off the unwanted advice or criticism that can come your way during the early months of parenting, and that can be especially hard to take when you are feeling depressed.

**Join a support group.** PPD support groups allow mothers who are dealing with depression to talk with others who have similar feelings. A list at the end of this section can help you find a group in your area. You might also call your health care provider, your local hospital, or your church for information. While PPD support groups are an excellent choice, any group for new mothers in which you can share your feelings about motherhood can help you feel better about yourself. Choose your support group with care, as you'll want to be around people who support your parenting decisions. Being with a group who criticizes or questions your mothering choices will make you feel worse, not better. Conversely, spending your time with like-minded people will boost your self-confidence and help you feel more confident as a mother. This idea shouldn't be seen as a cure, but rather one part of the process of recovery.

**Accept help from others.** If anyone offers to help you — whether it is to take your baby for a walk, cook a meal, or drive your older kids to sports practice — accept! Learn to say *yes*. You don't have to do everything to be a good mother. It's natural for human beings to lean on each other, so go ahead and do a little more leaning.

**Get some extra sleep.** Put your efforts to get your baby to sleep through the night on hold right now; this will come in time. Forget about the clock. Just sleep — both of you — whenever you can. Extra sleep will help you feel better.

**Relax your standards.** This is not the time to worry about a spotless house, gourmet meals, the corporate ladder, or your manicure. Try to stick to the basics and concentrate on yourself and your baby.

**Get some fresh air.** When possible, put your baby in the sling or the stroller and take a walk. The exercise and open spaces will help you feel more energized. Try to work a daily stroll into your schedule. If you have older children, walk them to school. If the weather isn't suitable for outdoor walking, then drive to a shopping mall for an indoor walk.

**Feed yourself healthy foods.** You can eat properly without much effort. Focus on fresh fruits and vegetables, and simple but nutritious meals. And eat frequently. Going long stretches without food wreaks havoc on your system. Simple snacks like an apple with peanut butter, a bagel, or yogurt with cottage cheese are easy to prepare and prevent your blood sugar from dipping and adding to your feelings of depression. Continue to take vitamins, and drink plenty of water.

**Love yourself.** You are going to be okay. Take it one step at a time...but do take steps (such as those outlined in this section). With help and time, you'll develop a refreshing and healthy outlook on your new role as a mother.

## For more information

### Books

*This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression*, by Karen Kleiman and Valerie Davis Raskin (Bantam Books, 1994)

*Beyond The Blues: Prenatal and Postpartum Depression, A Treatment Manual* by Shoshana Bennett and Pec Indman (Moodswings Press, 2002)

*The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night*  
By Elizabeth Pantley (McGraw-Hill, 2002)

### Web sites

Pacific Post Partum Support Society  
[www.postpartum.org](http://www.postpartum.org)

Depression After Delivery, Inc.  
[www.depressionafterdelivery.com](http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com)

### To locate a support group

Postpartum Support International  
[www.chss.iup.edu/postpartum](http://www.chss.iup.edu/postpartum)

Postpartum Education for Parents  
[www.sbpep.org](http://www.sbpep.org)

La Leche League Support Groups  
[www.lalecheleague.org/WebIndex.html](http://www.lalecheleague.org/WebIndex.html)

## How to Have a Happy Marriage When You're Busy Being Parents

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Kid Cooperation*, *Perfect Parenting* and *Hidden Messages*

Is your marriage everything you ever hoped it could be? Or has it been pushed down your list of priorities since having children? Let's face it, parenthood is a full-time job, and it dramatically changes your marriage relationship. But marriage is the foundation upon which your entire family is structured. If your marriage is strong, your whole family will be strong; your life will be more peaceful, you'll be a better parent, and you'll, quite simply, have more fun in your life.

### **Make a commitment**

To create or maintain a strong marriage you will have to take the first critical step: *You must be willing to put time, effort and thought into nurturing your marriage.* The ideas that follow will help you follow through on this commitment and will put new life and meaning into your marriage. A wonderful thing may happen. You may fall in love with your spouse all over again. In addition, your children will greatly benefit from your stronger relationship. Children feel secure when they know that Mom and Dad love each other—particularly in today's world, where 50 percent of marriages end in divorce; half of your children's friends have gone, or are going through a divorce; or maybe it's your kids who have survived a divorce and are now living in a new family arrangement. Your children need daily proof that their family life is stable and predictable. When you make a commitment to your marriage, your children will feel the difference. No, they won't suffer from neglect! They'll blossom when your marriage—and their homelife—is thriving.

The surprising secret is that this doesn't have to take any extra time in your already busy schedule. Just a change in attitude plus a committed focus can yield a stronger, happier marriage.

So here's my challenge to you. Read the following suggestions and apply them in your marriage for the next 30 days. Then evaluate your marriage. I guarantee you'll both be happier.

### **Look for the good, overlook the bad**

You married this person for many good reasons. Your partner has many wonderful qualities. Your first step in adding sizzle to your marriage is to look for the good and overlook the bad.

Make it a habit to ignore the little annoying things — dirty socks on the floor, a day-old coffee cup on the counter, worn out flannel pajamas, an inelegant burp at the dinner table — and choose instead to search for those things that make you smile: the way he rolls on the floor with the baby; the fact that she made your favorite cookies, the peace in knowing someone so well that you *can* wear your worn out flannels or burp at the table.

### **Give two compliments every day**

Now that you've committed to seeing the good in your partner, it's time to say it! This is a golden key to your mate's heart. Our world is so full of negative input, and we so rarely get compliments from other people. When we do get a compliment, it not only makes us feel great about ourselves, it actually makes us feel great about the person giving the compliment! Think about it! When your honey says, "You're the best. I'm so glad I married you." It not only makes you feel loved, it makes you feel more loving.

Compliments are easy to give, take such a little bit of time, and they're free. Compliments are powerful; you just have to make the effort to say them. Anything works: "Dinner was great, you make my favorite sauce." "Thanks for picking up the cleaning. It was very thoughtful, you saved me a trip." "That sweater looks great on you."

### **Play nice**

That may sound funny to you, but think about it. How many times do you see -- or experience -- partners treating each other in impolite, harsh ways that they'd never even treat a friend? Sometimes we take our

partners for granted and unintentionally display rudeness. As the saying goes, if you have a choice between being right and being nice, just choose to be nice. Or to put this in the wise words of Bambi's friend Thumper, the bunny rabbit – "If you can't say somethin' nice don't say nothin' at all."

### **Pick your battles**

How often have you heard this advice about parenting? This *is* great advice for child-rearing—and it's great advice to follow in your marriage as well. In any human relationship there will be disagreement and conflict. The key here is to decide which issues are worth pursuing and which are better off ignored. By doing this, you'll find much less negative energy between you. From now on, anytime you feel annoyed, take a minute to examine the issue at hand, and ask yourself a few questions. "How important is this?" "Is this worth picking a fight over?" "What would be the benefit of choosing this battle versus letting it go?"

### **The 60 second cuddle**

You can often identify a newly married couple just by how much they touch each other — holding hands, sitting close, touching arms, kissing — just as you can spot an "oldly-married" couple by how little they touch. Mothers, in particular, often have less need for physical contact with their partners because their babies and young children provide so much opportunity for touch and cuddling that day's end finds them "touched fulfilled".

So here's a simple reminder: make the effort to touch your spouse more often. A pat, a hug, a kiss, a shoulder massage – the good feeling it produces for both of you far outweighs the effort.

Here's the deal: Whenever you've been apart make it a rule that you will take just 60 seconds to cuddle, touch and connect. This can be addictive! If you follow this advice soon you'll find yourselves touching each other more often, and increasing the romantic aspect of your relationship.

### **Spend more time talking to and listening to your partner**

I don't mean, "Remember to pick up Jimmy's soccer uniform." Or "I have a PTA meeting tonight." Rather, get into the habit of sharing your thoughts about what you read in the paper, what you watch on TV, your hopes, your dreams, your concerns. Take a special interest in those things that your spouse is interested in and ask questions. And then listen to the answers.

### **Spend time with your spouse**

It can be very difficult for your marriage to thrive if you spend all your time being "Mommy" and "Daddy". You need to spend regular time as "Husband" and "Wife". This doesn't mean you have to take a two-week vacation in Hawaii. (Although that might be nice, too!) Just take small daily snippets of time when you can enjoy uninterrupted conversation, or even just quiet companionship, without a baby on your hip, a child tugging your shirtsleeve or a teenager begging for the car keys. A daily morning walk around the block or a shared cup of tea after all the children are in bed might work wonders to re-connect you to each other. And yes, it's quite fine to talk about your children when you're spending your time together, because, after all, your children are one of the most important connections you have in your relationship.

When you and your spouse regularly connect in a way that nurtures your relationship, you may find a renewed love between you, as well as a refreshed vigor that will allow you to be a better, more loving parent. You owe it to yourself — and to your kids — to nurture your relationship.

So take my challenge and use these ideas for the next 30 days. And watch your marriage take on a whole new glow.

## Separation Anxiety

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

*My baby is only happy when I'm within arm's reach. If I dare to leave the room, she cries as if I've left the country! I can't even so much as take a shower these days, let alone leave the house without her. My mother-in-law says it's because I've spoiled her. Is she right? Have I made her so clingy?*

Nothing you've done has "made" your baby develop separation anxiety. It's a perfectly normal and important developmental adaptation. Nearly all children experience separation anxiety between the ages of seven and 18 months. Some have more intense reactions than others, and for some, the stage lasts longer than others, but almost all babies have it to some degree.

The development of separation anxiety demonstrates that your baby has formed a healthy, loving attachment to you. It is a beautiful sign that your baby associates pleasure, comfort, and security with your presence. It also indicates that your baby is developing intellectually (in other words, she's smart!) She has learned that she can have an effect on her world when she makes her needs known, and she doesn't have to passively accept a situation that makes her uncomfortable. She doesn't know enough about the world yet to understand that when you leave her you'll always come back. She also realizes that she is safest, happiest, and best cared for by you, so her reluctance to part makes perfect sense — especially when viewed from a survival standpoint. Put another way: You are her source of nourishment, both physical and emotional; therefore, her attachment to you is her means of survival, and when she reaches a certain level of intellectual maturity, she realizes this.

This stage, like so many others in childhood, will pass. In time, your baby will learn that she *can* separate from you, that you will return, and that everything will be okay between those two points in time. Much of this learning is based on trust, which, just as for every human being young or old, takes time to build.

### **How do I know if my baby has separation anxiety?**

Separation anxiety is pretty easy to spot, and you're probably reading this section because you've identified it in your baby. The following are behaviors typically demonstrated by a baby with normal separation anxiety:

- Clinginess
- Crying when a parent is out of sight
- Strong preference for only one parent
- Fear of strangers
- Waking at night crying for a parent
- Easily comforted in a parent's embrace

### **How you can help your baby with separation anxiety**

- Allow your baby to be a baby. It's perfectly okay — even wonderful — for your baby to be so attached to you and for her to desire your constant companionship. Congratulations, Mommy or Daddy: It's evidence that the bond you've worked so hard to create is holding. So politely ignore those who tell you otherwise.
- Don't worry about spoiling her with your love, since quite the opposite will happen. The more that you meet her attachment needs during babyhood, the more confident and secure she will grow up to be.
- Minimize separations when possible. It's perfectly acceptable for now — better, in fact — to avoid those situations that would have you separate from your baby. All too soon, your baby will move past this phase and on to the next developmental milestone.

- Give your baby lessons in object permanence. As your baby learns that things continue to exist even when she can't see them, she'll feel better about letting you out of her sight. Games like peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek will help her understand this phenomenon.
- Practice with quick, safe separations. Throughout the day, create situations of brief separation. When you go into another room, whistle, sing, or talk to your baby so she knows you're still there, even though she can't see you.
- Don't sneak away when you have to leave her. It may seem easier than dealing with a tearful goodbye, but it will just cause her constant worry that you're going to disappear without warning at any given moment. The result? Even *more* clinginess, and diminished trust in your relationship.
- Tell your baby what to expect. If you are going to the store and leaving her at home with Grandma, explain where you are going and tell her when you'll be back. Eventually, she'll come to understand your explanations.
- Don't rush the parting, but don't prolong it, either. Give your baby ample time to process your leave-taking, but don't drag it out and make it more painful for both of you.
- Express a positive attitude when leaving her. If you're off to work, or an evening out, leave with a smile. Your baby will absorb your emotions, so if you're nervous about leaving her, she'll be nervous as well. Your confidence will help alleviate her fears.
- Leave your baby with familiar people. If you must leave your baby with a new caregiver, try to arrange a few visits when you'll all be together before you leave the two of them alone for the first time.
- Invite distractions. If you're leaving your baby with a caregiver or relative, encourage that person to get your baby involved with playtime as you leave. Say a quick good-bye and let your baby be distracted by an interesting activity.
- Allow your baby the separation that she initiates. If she crawls off to another room, don't rush after her. Listen and peek, of course, to make sure that she's safe, but let her know it's fine for her to go off exploring on her own.
- Encourage her relationship with a special toy, if she seems to have one. These are called *transitional objects* or loveys. They can be a comfort to her when she's separated from you. Many babies adopt blankets or soft toys as loveys, holding them to ease any pain of separation. The lovey becomes a friend and represents security in the face of change.
- Don't take it personally. Many babies go through a stage of attaching themselves to one parent or the other. The other parent, as well as grandparents, siblings and friends can find this difficult to accept, but try to reassure them that it's just a temporary and normal phase of development and with a little time and gentle patience it will pass.

## Handling Unwanted Advice

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Gentle Baby Care*

***“Help! I’m getting so frustrated with the endless stream of advice I get from my mother-in-law and brother! No matter what I do, I’m doing it wrong. I love them both, but how do I get them to stop dispensing all this unwanted advice?”***

Just as your baby is an important part of your life, he is also important to others. People who care about your baby are bonded to you and your child in a special way that invites their counsel. Knowing this may give you a reason to handle the interference gently, in a way that leaves everyone’s feelings intact.

Regardless of the advice, it is *your* baby, and in the end, you will raise your child the way that you think best. So it’s rarely worth creating a war over a well-meaning person’s comments. You can respond to unwanted advice in a variety of ways:

### **Listen first**

It’s natural to be defensive if you feel that someone is judging you; but chances are you are not being criticized; rather, the other person is sharing what they feel to be valuable insight. Try to listen - you may just learn something valuable.

### **Disregard**

If you know that there is no convincing the other person to change her mind, simply smile, nod, and make a non-committal response, such as, “Interesting!” Then go about your own business...your way.

### **Agree**

You might find one part of the advice that you agree with. If you can, provide wholehearted agreement on that topic.

### **Pick your battles**

If your mother-in-law insists that Baby wear a hat on your walk to the park, go ahead and pop one on his head. This won’t have any long-term effects except that of placating her. However, don’t capitulate on issues that are important to you or the health or well-being of your child.

### **Steer clear of the topic**

If your brother is pressuring you to let your baby cry to sleep, but you would never do that, then don’t complain to him about your baby getting you up five times the night before. If *he* brings up the topic, then distraction is definitely in order, such as, “Would you like a cup of coffee?”

### **Educate yourself**

Knowledge is power; protect yourself and your sanity by reading up on your parenting choices. Rely on the confidence that you are doing your best for your baby.

### **Educate the other person**

If your “teacher” is imparting information that you know to be outdated or wrong, share what you’ve learned on the topic. You may be able to open the other person’s mind. Refer to a study, book, or report that you have read.

### **Quote a doctor**

Many people accept a point of view if a professional has validated it. If your own pediatrician agrees with your position, say, “My doctor said to wait until she’s at least six months before starting solids.” If your *own* doctor doesn’t back your view on that issue, then refer to another doctor - perhaps the author of a baby care book.

### **Be vague**

You can avoid confrontation with an elusive response. For example, if your sister asks if you’ve started potty training yet (but you are many months away from even starting the process), you can answer with, “We’re moving in that direction.”

### **Ask for advice!**

Your friendly counselor is possibly an expert on a few issues that you can agree on. Search out these points and invite guidance. She’ll be happy that she is helping you, and you’ll be happy you have a way to avoid a showdown about topics that you *don’t* agree on.

### **Memorize a standard response**

Here's a comment that can be said in response to almost any piece of advice: "This may not be the right way for you, but it's the right way for *me*."

**Be honest**

Try being honest about your feelings. Pick a time free of distractions and choose your words carefully, such as, "I know how much you love Harry, and I'm glad you spend so much time with him. I know you think you're helping me when you give me advice about this, but I'm comfortable with my own approach, and I'd really appreciate if you'd understand that."

**Find a mediator**

If the situation is putting a strain on your relationship with the advice-giver, you may want to ask another person to step in for you.

**Search out like-minded friends**

Join a support group or on-line club with people who share your parenting philosophies. Talking with others who are raising their babies in a way that is similar to your own can give you the strength to face people who don't understand your viewpoints.

## What is Preventing Your Baby From Sleeping Through the Night?

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Here's something that may really surprise you: As much as we may want our babies to sleep through the night, our own subconscious emotions sometimes hold us back from encouraging change in our babies' sleeping habits. You yourself may be the very obstacle preventing a change in a routine that disrupts your life. So let's figure out if anything is standing in *your* way.

### Examine Your Own Needs and Goals

Today's society leads us to believe that "normal babies" sleep through the night from about two months; my research indicates that this is more the exception than the rule. The number of families in your boat could fill a fleet of cruise ships.

*"At our last day-care parent meeting, one father brought up the fact that his two-year-old daughter wasn't sleeping through the night. I discovered that out of 24 toddlers only six stayed asleep all night long."  
...Robin, mother of thirteen-month-old Alicia*

You must figure out where your own problem lies. Is it in your baby's routine, in your management of it, or simply in the minds of others? If you can honestly say you want to change your baby's sleep habits because they are truly disruptive to you and your family, then you're ready to make changes. But if you feel coerced into changing Baby's patterns because Great Grandma Beulah or your friend from playgroup says that's the way it should be, it's time for a long, hard think.

Certainly, if your little one is waking you up every hour or two, you don't have to think long on the question, "Is this disruptive to me?" It obviously is. However, if your baby is waking up only once or twice a night, it's important that you determine exactly how much this pattern is disturbing to you, and decide on a realistic goal. Be honest in assessing the situation's effect on your life. Begin today by contemplating these questions:

- Am I content with the way things are, or am I becoming resentful, angry, or frustrated?
- Is my baby's nighttime routine negatively affecting my marriage, job, or relationships with my other children?
- Is my baby happy, healthy, and seemingly well rested?
- Am I happy, healthy, and well rested?

Once you answer these questions, you will have a better understanding of not only what is happening with regard to your baby's sleep, but also how motivated you are to make a change.

### Reluctance to Let Go of Those Nighttime Moments

A good, long, honest look into your heart may truly surprise you. You may find you actually *relish* those quiet night wakings when no one else is around. I remember in the middle of one night, I lay nursing Coleton by the light of the moon. The house was perfectly, peacefully quiet. As I gently stroked his downy hair and soft baby skin, I marveled at this tiny being beside me—and the thought hit me, "I love this! I love these silent moments that we share in the night." It was then that I realized that even though I struggled through my baby's hourly nighttime wakings, I needed to *want* to make a change in our night waking habits before I would see any changes in his sleeping patterns.

You may need to take a look at your own feelings. And if you find you're truly ready to make a change, you'll need to give yourself permission to let go of this stage of your baby's life and move on to a different phase in your relationship. There will be lots of time to hug, cuddle, and love your little one, but you must truly feel ready to move those moments out of your sleeping time and into the light of day.

## **Worry About Your Baby's Safety**

We parents worry about our babies, and we should! With every night waking, as we have been tending to our child's nightly needs, we have also been reassured that our baby is doing fine — every hour or two all night long. We get used to these checks; they provide continual reassurance of Baby's safety.

*“The first time my baby slept five straight hours, I woke up in a cold sweat. I nearly fell out of bed and ran down the hall. I was so sure that something was horribly wrong. I nearly wept when I found her sleeping peacefully.” ...Azza, mother of seven-month-old Laila*

Co-sleeping parents are not exempt from these fears. Even if you are sleeping right next to your baby, you'll find that you have become used to checking on her frequently through the night. Even when she's sleeping longer stretches, *you* aren't sleeping, because you're still on security duty.

These are very normal worries, rooted in your natural instincts to protect your baby. Therefore, for you to allow your baby to sleep for longer stretches, you'll need to find ways to feel confident that your baby is safe—all night long.

Once you reassure yourself that your baby is safe while you sleep, you'll have taken that first step toward helping her sleep all night.

## **Belief That Things Will Change on Their Own**

You may hope, pray, and wish that one fine night, your baby will magically begin to sleep through the night. Maybe you're crossing your fingers that he'll just “outgrow” this stage, and you won't have to do anything different at all. It's a very rare night-waking baby who suddenly decides to sleep through the night all on his own. Granted, this may happen to you—but your baby may be two, three or four years old when it does! Decide now whether you have the patience to wait that long, or if you are ready to gently move the process along.

## **Too Fatigued to Work Toward Change**

Change requires effort, and effort requires energy. In an exhausted state, we may find it easier just to keep things as they are than try something different. In other words, when Baby wakes for the fifth time that night, and I'm desperate for sleep, it's so much easier just to resort to the easiest way to get him back to sleep (rock, nurse, or replace the pacifier) than it is to try something different.

Only a parent who is truly sleep deprived can understand what I'm saying here. Others may calmly advise, “Well if things aren't working for you, just change what you're doing.” However, every night waking puts you in that foggy state where the only thing you crave is going back to sleep—plans and ideas seem like too much effort.

If you are to help your baby sleep all night, you *will* have to force yourself to make some changes and follow your plan, even in the middle of the night, even if it's the tenth time your baby has called out for you.

So, after reading this section and you're sure you and your baby are ready, it's time for you to *make a commitment to change*. That is the first important step to helping your baby sleep through the night.

## Eight Sleep Tips for Every Child

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Up to 70% of children under age five have sleep problems. Sleep issues are complicated and have many causes. They're hard to deal with because when children aren't sleeping, parents aren't sleeping, and that lack of sleep affects *every minute of every day for every person* in the family because lack of sleep isn't just about being tired. Sleep has a role in *everything* -- dawdling, temper tantrums, hyperactivity, growth, health, and even learning to tie his shoes and recite the ABCs. Sleep affects *everything*. The following ideas are of value to almost any sleeper, of any age. These tips can bring improvement not only in your child's sleep, but also in her daytime mood and last, but not least – improvements in your own sleep and outlook as well.

### # 1 Maintain a consistent bedtime and awaking time.

Your child's biological clock has a strong influence on her wakefulness and sleepiness. When you establish a set time for bedtime and wake up time you "set" your child's clock so that it functions smoothly.

Aim for an early bedtime. Young children respond best with a bedtime between 6:30 and 7:30 P.M. Most children will sleep *better* and *longer* when they go to bed early.

### # 2 Encourage regular daily naps.

Daily naps are important. An energetic child can find it difficult to go through the day without a rest break. A nap-less child will often wake up cheerful and become progressively fussier or hyper-alert as the day goes on. Also, the length and quality of naps affects night sleep – good naps equal better night sleep.

### # 3 Set your child's biological clock.

Take advantage of your child's biology so that he's actually *tired* when bedtime arrives. Darkness causes an increase in the release of the body's sleep hormone -- the biological "stop" button. You can align your child's sleepiness with bedtime by dimming the lights during the hour before bedtime.

Exposing your child to morning light is pushing the "go" button in her brain — one that says, "Time to wake up and be active." So keep your mornings bright!

### # 4 Develop a consistent bedtime routine.

Routines create security. A consistent, peaceful bedtime routine allows your child to transition from the motion of the day to the tranquil state of sleep.

An organized routine helps you coordinate the specifics: bath, pajamas, tooth-brushing. It helps you to function on auto-pilot at the time when you are most tired and least creative.

### # 5 Create a cozy sleep environment.

Where your child sleeps can be a key to quality sleep. Make certain the mattress is comfortable, the blankets are warm, the room temperature is right, pajamas are comfy, and the bedroom is welcoming.

### # 6 Provide the right nutrition.

Foods can affect energy level and sleepiness. Carbohydrates can have a calming effect on the body, while foods high in protein or sugar generate alertness, particularly when eaten alone. A few ideas for pre-bed snacks are: whole wheat toast and cheese, bagel and peanut butter, oatmeal with bananas, or yogurt and low-sugar granola.

Vitamin deficiencies due to unhealthy food choices can affect a child's sleep. Provide your child with a daily assortment of healthy foods.

#### **# 7 Help your child to be healthy and fit.**

Many children don't get enough daily physical activity. Too much TV watching and a lack of activity prevents good sleep. Children who get ample daily exercise fall asleep more quickly, sleep better, stay asleep longer, and wake up feeling refreshed.

Avoid activity in the hour before bedtime though, since exercise is stimulating – they'll be jumping on the bed instead of sleeping in it!

#### **# 8 Teach your child how to relax.**

Many children get in bed but aren't sure what to do when they get there! It can help to follow a soothing pre-bed routine that creates sleepiness. A good pre-bed ritual is story time. A child who is listening to a parent read a book or tell a tale will tend to lie still and listen. This quiet stillness allows him to become sleepy.

**Work with these eight ideas and you'll see improvements in your child's sleep, and yours too.**