

Better sleep with your baby's dummy/pacifier.

Baby SLEEP CONSULTANT

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STAGES AND PHASES OF DUMMY'S AND SLEEP.

Dummy's can be a life saver when it comes to newborn sleep, but many people worry they'll be locked in for ever to using a dummy, or that they're creating some kind of sleep association that will bit them late ron. Parents also tell me they're not sure how to get rid of the dummy, or if they can sleep train while keeping the dummy?

Let me clear up some of these questions, concerns and issues you might be having with your childs dummy.



Newborns

In the newborn months, being able to suck to soothe is one of the cornerstone 5 S's to help your baby calm down enough that you can help them get off to sleep.
Many babies will take a dummy in these months, quickly falling asleep once the dummy is in.
The first problem arises that these can often fall out, and then your baby wakes up crying, looking for you to come and settle them again shortly into their nap or night sleep.
If this is you...

Try this...

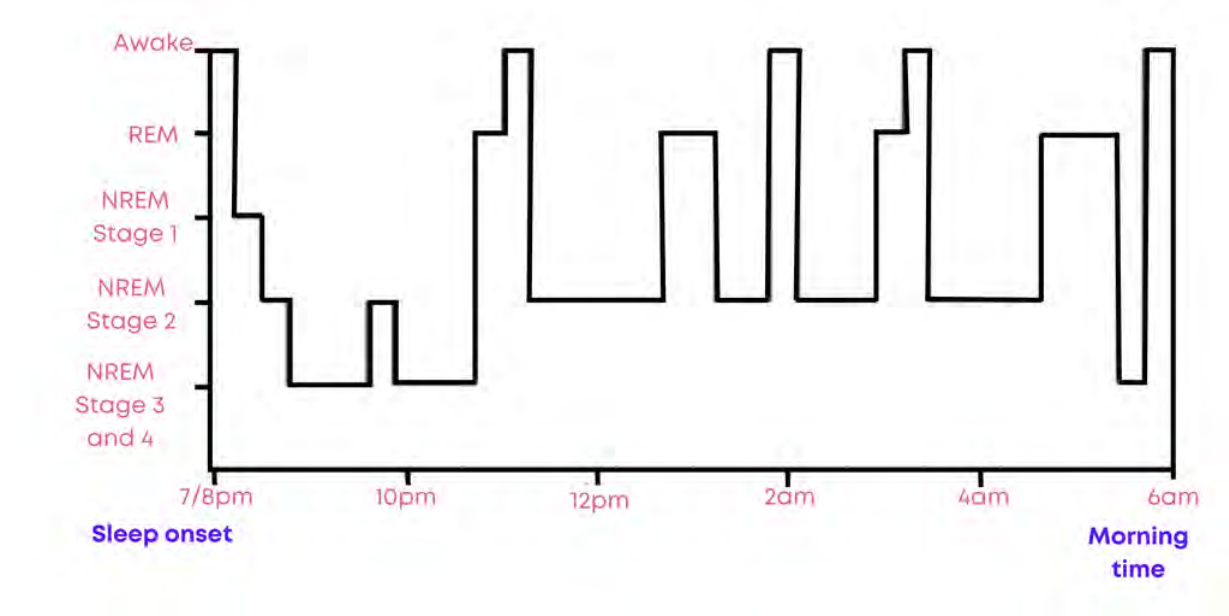
As your baby drifts off to sleep with their dummy in, tug at it and make it hard to hold it in. This replicates the moment it starts to slip out naturally and teaches your baby to hold onto it when that feeling comes up.
Doing this for 10 minutes at the start of each nap can improve how well your baby can hold that dummy throughout a rest or overnight.

Settlig in the cot

We know that settling from awake to asleep in the cot usually results in longer sleeps, naps and at night, but for a lot of new parents this is tricky!
Using a dummy in combination wih a good swaddle, and even a good shush pat strategy can really increase your chances that your newborn will settle from awake to asleep in their cot.
This means as they start to get older and wake a little at the end of their sleep cycle wondering where they are., they'll look around for a moment and see they are still in their cot and more than likely go back to sleep.
As opposed to if they had fallen asleep in your arms and then have been transfered to the cot.



Remember as your baby hits the 4 month sleep regression age, they'll start to have wakes every 90-120 minutes through the night, and their sleep looks like this.



If they aren't falling asleep in the cot, or their dummy is falling out this is how many times through th enight, they'll need your help. This kind of broken sleep can quickly become exhausting.

3-6 month olds and their dummy

This is the age when most parents decide to either keep the dummy long-term or ditch it.
Reasons you might decide to ditch it are...

- Despite your best efforts they're waking every 1-2 hours for you to pop their dummy back in, and you don't want to wait until 7-8 months to teach find and replace.
- Your long term goal was always to only use the dummy in the newborn months.
- It's not working and they don't quickly settle to sleep, it's hindering their sleep.



Can you wean a dummy at this age?

If you decide ok I think I need to ditch/remove the dummy at this age, it's no longer working.
Can I wean it off?
The answer is yes and no.
Some babies are ok with things being a bit inconsistent which is essentially what weaning is, and some are not.
If you want to try “weaning the dummy", you have options.

You can...

- Remove it nap by nap, and wake up by wake up at night, gradually using it less and less.
- Use it only in the pre sleep phase of settling, calm baby with it but don't use it in the cot.
- Use it only for naps and not at night.
- Use it only to re-settle naps, not settle at the start of naps.
- Gradually use it less and less as you work on settling another way, or self settling.

If your baby is sensitive to these inconsistencies and doesn't improve, you would need to just remove it and focus on self settling.

7-12 month olds and dummies

We are in the age range where it starts to become easier to teach your baby to find their dummy at night and pop it back in themselves than it is to get rid of it all together.

Although it is never too late to move on from the dummy. You can teach your baby to find their own dummy with something like a Sleepytot (featured below) which makes finding the dummy much easier!

You will need to show them where the dummy is, but not put it in for them. Intially you can put it in their hand, but you need to eventually let them pick it up from the matress and pop it in themselves.

The more you put it in their mouth, the slower they will learn to do it themsleves and sleep longer.



Toddlers

If your toddler is doing things like loosing their dummy at night, wanting to carry it around the house all day, or throwing it from the cot here are some tips.

Throwing it from the cot: Wait 10 minutes, pick it up and place it in the cot not in thier hand. We want to avoid this becoming a game.

Loosing it in their bed: Place a spare one in a container next to their bed and practise through role play them finding it at night.

Carrying it around all day: Establish a special container that it lives in nice and high up. Start a ritual each morning of putting it away, and celebrate the success of putting it out of sight. Stay consistent!



Toddler problems.

At some point you will want to get rid of your toddlers dummy, and this can be a tricky decision if this is the only way your toddler has ever known to sleep!
Often their is a transitional stage as your toddler is learning a new way of falling asleep.
I recommend things like stories and sitting with them on your own chair at bed as a great way to habit stack a new habit for your toddler.
If you can help your toddler to fall asleep with just stories and you sitting near them, you can gradually move away and reduce the number of stories as they get used to sleeping without their dummy.

Things like the dummy fairy taking the dummy to a new baby, or the rubbish truck taking it away can help with that cold turkey approach, but ultimately your toddler still has to learn to fall asleep without it.

Have patience as it's likely been years since they slept any other way, the transition wont happen in one night.

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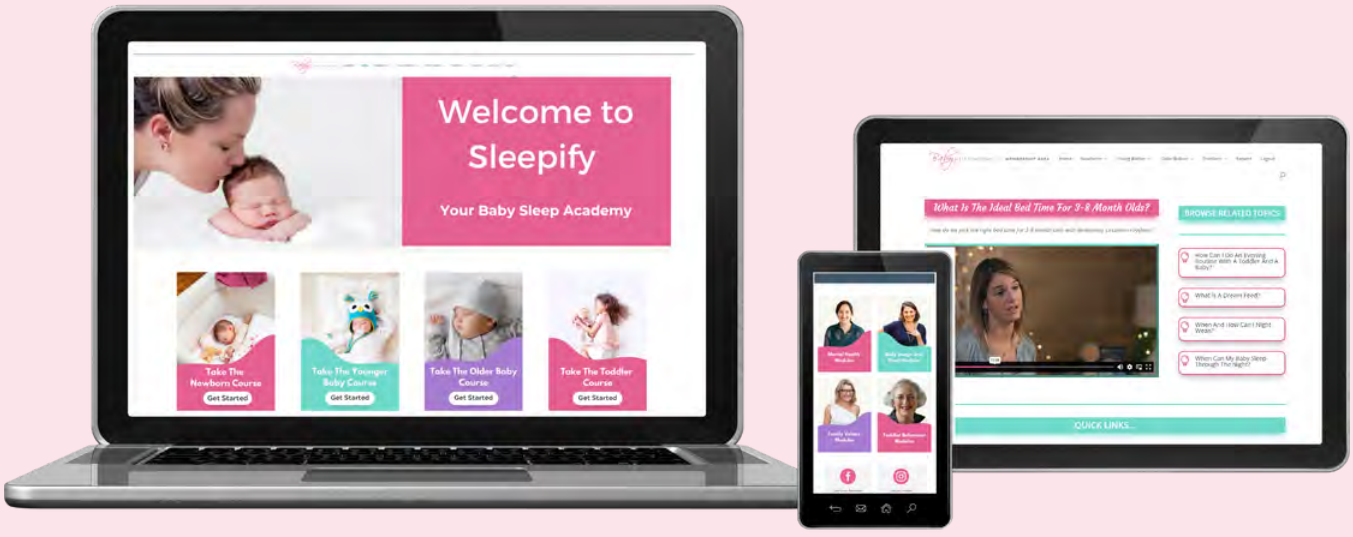
What is Sleepify?

Our membership site designed for parents of 0-5 year olds. Take a sleep course, get all your questions answered, or jump into a toddler behaviour module, or mental health answers. Live Q and A included!

Whats inside?

Newborn, infant, baby and toddler sleep courses, master classes, videos, flip books, guides, case studies and live Q and A.

Click to get started...



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Author

Emma Purdue is the owner and founder of Baby Sleep Consultant NZ and Australia, Happiest Baby on the Block educator, and Mother of 3. She has a Bachelor of Science and a Diploma in Education from the University of Auckland.

Her approaches in child sleep have led to developing an international training company, certifying and training sleep consultants worldwide. www.babysleepconsultanttraining.com

Emma's team of consultants has helped over 100,000 tired parents around the world; they understand sleep in all areas, as well as parental stress and the emotional challenge we face as parents when trying to improve our children's sleep.

It's not easy and you only want what's best for your child. The Baby Sleep Consultant Team have many free resources on our website in addition to this sleep guide www.babysleepconsultant.co

We have live sleep Q&A on our Instagram every Sunday https://www.instagram.com/babysleepconsultant/ join us for one soon!

If you need some one on one assistance we offer phone, email and home consults, please get in touch admin@babysleepconsultant.co.nz