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## Rinse & Repeat Method- No-Low Cry Method

### Preparation for Sleep Changes

- There are many things parents can do before beginning a sleep intervention to help themselves and their child to prepare for the changes up ahead.
- If you are moving your child from the family bed, or from a shared room arrangement, please begin to get your child's room/nursery ready. Put up darkening drapes, if the room is very bright or on a busy street. If you are using the crib as a toy box area, pull out all toys from the crib, leaving only 1-2 soft-sided and small lovey-type toys. Also, pull out any quilts or blankets if your child is under 1 year old, as you will be using a sleeping sack such as Halo's Sleep Sack, to keep your child warm and safe for sleeping.
- Start to put your child in his crib for non-sleeping time, such as when you are in your child's room together. You can also add a mobile or a crib-side toy for your child to play with you put them in the crib.
- Start spending more time in child's room, bath time, diaper changes, playing, reading, cuddling, and getting dressed- you want to send the message to your child that their room is a secure and familiar place to be and you can do this by "building attachment" to the room.
- Remember to also spend time in child's room for play time too, such as floor time, or using a new favorite toy in your child's room. Again, think in terms of time spent in child's room helps them to feel confident about being in their room for sleeping.
- If you are moving your child into a toddler bed, remove any unsafe shelves that child may climb, or bolt to wall, and watch temperature of room, and location of vents (heat or air) if child is sensitive to air blowing on them
- Spend your child's bedtime ritual/routine in their room, reading books, and cuddling. After bath time, bring your child to their warmed bedroom, for massage, diaper, jammies, sing bedtime songs, breastfeed or bottle feed, cuddle, and let baby know, that soon this will be their room for sleeping too. Do not put child to bed in their crib/room yet until you and your child are ready to start the sleep changes. Remember, you can even make-up a little song about how this room is going to be your child's sleep room very soon, as sing it to baby during the massage, diaper and jammies time. Even very young children under 6 months respond to repetition and familiar words communicated by a parent.
- Start to talk to your child about the sleep changes that are coming up. You can do this very simply by saying to your child the following:  
"Mommy/Daddy are noticing that you are waking up more at night from Mommy/Daddy night sounds. And, Mommy/Daddy are noticing that you are getting very big for your bassinet, or cradle in Mommy/Daddy's room. We have been spending time in your room playing, cuddling, and feeding, and soon you will be sleeping in your room. And, if you need Mommy/Daddy at night, you can let us know by calling out for us and we will be there."
- Try to "talk" to your child especially when doing the morning wake up, or before naps, or bedtime, and also when playing. Remember, children understand much more than we give them credit for. Additionally, talking about the changes will help parents to prepare for the sleep changes, especially if parents have mixed feelings about making the sleep changes, and/or are feeling guilty or anxious about making sleep changes.
- During the day, help your child to practice moving, rolling, getting onto their belly, and getting onto their back, and falling from standing so that they can do the same when they are sleeping in their crib. You can do this during floor time.
- Try to start to practice naps out of your arms, if you have been napping with your child and want to move them to their room/crib for naps. You can do this with naps in the stroller, or baby carrier. Try this for morning, or mid-day naps.
- If breastfeeding your child at night, start to notice how much/how long your child is eating at the breast. Is your child eating every few hours, or even less, and maybe using the breast to pacify at night? Notice how long your child is eating? Eating hungrily? Snacking, and sleeping?
- Set up a clock next to the bed, or across the room that you can read at night, to get a sense of how long, and start to experiment with slowly dropping one minute per feed at night. You can do this successfully by feeding sitting up, and also letting baby know that you are taking them off of the breast a little early. You can effectively and gently drop "snack feed" at night this way.
- Finally, when moving your child from family bed to crib sleeping, you can help them to get ready for the changes, by transitioning them from the family bed to a bassinet or pack-n-play or side bed before moving them to their room/crib. In this way, your child will begin to get used to a little bit more distance between mommy and child at night. Also, you can ask your partner/spouse to sleep closer to your child so again there is a little more distance between mommy and child, and your partner/spouse can comfort at night, rather than offering a feed to comfort child.

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## **Rinse and Repeat: No-Low Crying Sleep Method for Infant/Toddler**

- Take the next week to “build attachment” to child’s room (especially for bedtimes and nap-times and night-times)
- Start by spending more time in child’s room, bath time, diaper changes, playing, reading, cuddling, and getting dressed- you want to send the message to your child that their room is a secure and warm place to be and you can do this by “building attachment” to the room
- Make room child-friendly, darkening drapes where needed, sound machine, make the crib safe, lower the crib mattress or remove objects hanging from wall above child can remove, add child’s fave stuffed animal or lovey (12 inches by 12 inches) to crib/bed
- Remove any unsafe shelves that child may climb, or bolt to wall, and watch temperature of room, and location of vents (heat or air) if child is sensitive to air blowing on them. Use darkening shades or black-out drapes and sound machines.
- Spend child’s bedtime ritual in their room, reading books, and cuddling. Be sure to follow a consistent bedtime ritual, and separate play time or feeding time that was happening outside of child’s room, from the bedtime ritual so that your child has the opportunity to “slow down” their body to get ready for bed.
- Look at your calendar and pick a date to start the sleep changes. Pick a date that allows you at least 1-4 weeks to devote to a crying method and 8-16 weeks or more to devote to non-crying, or low intervention method. This doesn’t mean that you won’t have anything else happening during this time. It does mean that you will want to keep the routine or schedule as consistent as possible, so that your child can master the sleep changes, especially around bedtimes and nap times.
- Allow for neighbors, nanny, friends and family members to provide extra support and help. This can come in the way of checking in and providing support, or helping out for a few hours so that you can get a nap, as you may be up more at night.
- In the next week, if you are breastfeeding, observe your child’s night breastfeeding pattern- Does your child eat hungrily? Does your child snack? Is your child falling asleep at the breast and staying there past the feeding time? Or perhaps your child isn’t eating at all at night, which will make it easier for you to make night time changes. Also, begin to feed your child in a rocking chair, any place other than the family bed or side-lie feeding position, as you start to get baby used to the changes up ahead.

### **Starting the Intervention- Parental Presence/Non-crying or low-crying**

*To do this method, you will need a comfy chair (rocking chair) or mattress placed next to your child’s crib.*

- It is important that the parent control the comfort. Instead of having your child hold your hand, you should intermittently pat your child, or comfort your child. Make sure that you do not caress your child too steadily; do it on and off. You don’t want to swap one negative association, like holding for another, like your constant touch or the sound of your voice. Don’t depend too much on touch because later on, as you move your chair/bed away, you won’t be touching as much.
- With this method, you are doing a little less comforting over a period of time. Provide brief and intermittent comforting close to or over the crib, and bounce lightly. Return baby to his crib promptly, and use the shh/pat to continue to calm. If baby fusses again, pick up promptly. You may have to do this several times called the **“Rinse & Repeat.”**
- Try not to convey anxiety about possible tears to your child. Take deep breaths, remain calm, and know that you are helping your child to sleep well at night so that child can sleep confidently and securely later on in his childhood. If you do find yourself growing frustrated, or angry, take a break and do leave the room for 1-5 minutes. This is OK and safer for baby and you too. Before you leave, let your baby/child know that you are leaving.
- If baby is having a particularly difficult night, and you are getting tired, sit with baby in the rocking chair, (or sleep on the mattress) and rest together and then transfer to crib. In this way, you will still be working at moving baby out of the family bed, while not getting overwhelmed, and getting a little rest for you and baby. But do work at not doing this every night or throughout the night.

-For your child's bedtime, do follow your bedtime routine, and offer a breastfeed or bedtime bottle. If possible, try to put child in crib while drowsy. If this is not possible, try to rouse your child gently with some gentle stroking when putting in crib. Stay with your child, and keep your hands on your child as needed "**Weighted Hands**" or the "**Transfer Cuddle.**" When your child is asleep, do leave the room. If your child awakens, go to him quickly, and comfort, soothe, pick up if necessary and rock and "rinse and repeat" above by placing him back in the crib and keeping a hand on him. You may have to do this several times for bedtimes or middle-of-the-the-night awakenings.

-Use the same technique for nighttime pops, going to your child, avoid popping the paci back in (if using a paci) but rather use a quick pick up if necessary putting back down drowsy and using shhh/pat to help your child to go to sleep. If you need to offer the paci, start to try to wean off by introducing a lovey or transitional blanket starting at 5-8 mos of age.

-Remember that when you have a hand on your child, remember to "breathe sleep" through your hand to your child, and a few moments before you pull your hand away, put a little intention and let your child know that you will be pulling your hand away and this is sleep time and you are not far away should your child need you.

-Some parents like to lean against the side of the crib and put some weight on baby a la co-sleeping to reassure baby, and shhh close to babies face. You can also do this when you transfer baby to the crib. I call this the "**Transfer Cuddle,**" or "**Weighted Hands.**"

-As you are making these sleep changes, talk to your child about what is going on- it can sound a little like this:  
"\_\_\_\_\_ (insert your child's name here), Mommy/Daddy are helping you to sleep a little more on your own, and it is a little bit different then the way that you are used to sleeping. Now, Mommy/Daddy are going to help you to sleep longer in your crib at night with one or two nighttime feeds, and help you to put yourself back to sleep if you awaken at night. Mommy/Daddy (or nanny) will help you to sleep there for your naps. If you need anything during your naps or at night, you are so good at using your voice to tell Mommy/Daddy what you need and we will be right there for you."

-Do keep feeding your child according to the feeds recommended in the schedule for your child's age, but try not to use night feeds to put back to sleep at night. If baby has just fed 1-3 hrs before, encourage other parent to rock down to sleep.

-Daddy/partner can stay in the room, sleeping there for the whole night, while baby sleeps in the crib. If baby sees less of mommy at night wakings not feeding related, baby will be less inclined to cry for breastfeeding to go back to sleep.

-With this approach, you are using communication and parent presence to help your child gently wean from needing the breast to go back to sleep at night. Remember, toddlers and even babies understand much more then we give them credit for! Talk to your child during the day about how daddy/caregiver will be helping them to go back to sleep at night.

-With this approach, you are breaking down the changes into little pieces. If you have been using the family bed, start by moving your child out of the family bed, and use the rocking chair (or mattress) in your child's room to comfort. When you have been successful with the rocking chair, and transferring to crib asleep, then try to transfer baby to crib drowsy, and use the "**Transfer Cuddle.**" This is a very gradual approach, and you will see small changes rather then big changes.

-If making nap changes, try to keep 75% of naps happening in his room, in the rocking chair, and eventually in the crib using the "Transfer Cuddle," shhhh, pat, and "rinse and repeat" when necessary. Many families like to start nights first, and after a month of night success, or improved nights, will then work at improving naps.

-Hang in there with the sleep changes- this is a gradual approach (up to 8-16 weeks) or more if child gets sick, or has a major developmental milestone or if you travel)- be patient and do check in with me with concerns or questions.

### **Completing the Sleep Changes**

-This method works because you make very slow gradual changes trading one sleep association, such as breastfeeding down to sleep, for another sleep association, such as bouncing down to sleep. Baby learns that parent is still close by, but also starts to need a little less of parents help to fall asleep. This method relies heavily on others helping since babies who are used to being breastfed down to sleep will do better with other caregiver stepping in and comforting baby down to sleep in other ways.

- This method relies on patience, and swapping sleep associations that require more parent help for sleep associations that require less of parents while helping baby to use more of their own self-soothing such as rolling to belly, sleep cry and sucking on hands.