



Sleep Training for Infants: Ferber's Progressive Waiting Approach

This approach teaches your baby how to fall asleep independently and allows you to gradually limit the time you spend in your baby's room while providing regular comfort and reassurance.

So here's what you do: after completing your baby's bedtime routine, place him in the crib awake and leave the room. Now again, make sure your baby is going down completely awake, NOT the least bit drowsy because we want him doing all of the work on his own. If he starts to cry, you may check on him using increasing intervals. The chart below suggests the number of minutes to wait before going to him. When you reach the maximum number of minutes to wait for a particular night, continue to check on your baby for the same amount of time until your baby falls asleep while you are out of the room OR he stops crying.

FERBER'S PROGRESSIVE WAITING APPROACH

Day	At First Wait	Second Wait	Third Wait	Subsequent Waits
1	3	5	10	10
2	5	10	12	12
3	10	12	15	15
4	12	15	17	17
5	15	17	20	20
6	17	20	25	25
7	20	25	30	30

So for example, on the first night of sleep training, you check on him after 3 minutes of crying, then after 5 minutes of crying, then after 10 minutes of crying, then every subsequent 10 minutes until he either stops crying consistently or falls asleep. Each time you go in, do not spend longer than 10 seconds with him. Go halfway into the room and repeat a calming and soothing phrase when checking on him, such as “Sweetie, Mommy loves you, it’s time to go to sleep. Good night”. You want to be a robot during each check- do the exact same thing every single time so that you eliminate any element of surprise. Now, do not check on him if he’s whining, moaning, squawking, etc. **Only check on him when he’s giving you a consistent cry.** If he wakes up in the middle of the night, restart the schedule with the minimum waiting time for that night and do exactly what you did at bedtime. All the same rules apply.

Now, here are my top tips when executing Ferber, and many of them are similar to my Shuffle tips:

1. Remember that your job during the checks is to reassure him and yourself that everything is okay. Your job **isn’t to stop the crying.**

2. Also, remember that it's no longer your job to help him fall asleep. He needs to learn to do this on his own. During each of the 10 second checks just repeat your calming phrase and then leave. Don't pat or touch him during the checks as it'll likely tease him and further aggravate him.
3. If your baby takes a pacifier, it's the same protocol as with the Shuffle. He must put it back in his mouth by himself OR learn to fall asleep without it.
4. If your baby rolls onto his other side and gets stuck, avoid rolling him back over very time- make sure to have a plan in place and refer to the Famous Developmental Milestones module.
5. Same thing if your baby stands up in the crib: you can lie him back down once, and only once if you know he can sit down by himself, but have a plan in place and refer to the Famous Developmental Milestones module.
6. I know I've said this before, but I'll say it again. If your baby is eating at nighttime, **do not** feed her back to sleep, or halfway to sleep. Always place her back in the crib **completely awake** to avoid confusion and intermittent reinforcement. Pay very close attention to the suckling - when the active eating stops, break the latch immediately, give her a burp if necessary and put her back down as awake as possible. Continue with the sleep training if she begins to cry.
7. If your baby wakes up before 6am, treat this as a night waking, so continue with the timed checks. If he doesn't go back to sleep by the time it's 6am-6:15am, go into his room, turn on the lights and give him a big good morning. This way, he knows that you're getting him up because it's morning, NOT because he's been fussing for the last 30 minutes.
8. And lastly, always reward the calm!

Now let's say that your baby wakes up at 5:30am and he doesn't fall back asleep, and it's now 6:00am. Here's what

you want to do: Leave the room for about 30 seconds or so, come back in, turn on the lights and give him a BIG good morning. You want to send the message to your baby that you're coming to get him because it's morning, not because he's just been crying for the last 30 minutes. The next thing you want to do is go to your baby's crib and try to calm her down a notch or two with your voice and with your presence. Don't pick her up if she's hysterical- we want to be rewarding a calm baby, not a hysterical one. She doesn't need to stop crying completely, but she needs to calm down a bit. We want the baby to learn to be content in her crib so that she can relax and eventually learn to roll over and go back to sleep. This is very very important here everyone: **always reward the calm, don't reward hysterics!**

So that's Ferber. Now, some of you might be thinking: "Gosh - the Shuffle sounds great but I think my baby would go nuts with me there. And Ferber sounds a bit too much for me". If that's the case, I would suggest you check out the Sleep Wave module.