



## No-Cry Sleep Training: Decreasing Assistance

The first approach, and my favourite no-crying sleep training approach, is to gradually decrease your assistance to help your child fall asleep.

Say you have a baby or toddler that is feeding or rocking to sleep, and you want to teach the child how to fall asleep independently and limit the crying as much as possible. A possible solution is to gradually get your baby in the crib, one step at a time. So start off by replacing feeding to sleep with rocking to sleep. From there, gradually decrease the rocking so that you're eventually holding the child to sleep.

The next step from there, and this is a big one, is to hold the baby until he's half asleep or so, and then put him in the crib or bed very drowsy and pat him all the way to sleep. Over time, try to place the baby more and more awake in the sleep space and pat all the way to sleep. Once the baby is being placed completely awake in the crib and being patted all the way to sleep, try to decrease the frequency, duration and pressure of the patting. Once the patting is eliminated, use your presence to calm the baby or toddler if it's helpful. And then the last step from this point would be moving further and further away from the crib, as per the Shuffle, or simply leaving the room—whatever you think your child would prefer!

So here is some important information regarding this approach.

1) I wouldn't recommend it for a child who doesn't transfer well. So if you nurse your baby to sleep or rock to sleep and it's incredibly challenging to get him out of your arms and into the crib, this approach probably won't be a good fit because he'll pick up on these small changes and likely fight them. Now, if your child DOES transfer nicely and you are nursing your baby to sleep, have dad or another caregiver (if possible) rock him to sleep instead because it might be frustrating for the baby to be rocked to sleep by mom when he's expecting to be nursed.

2) The amount of time you spend on each step is up to you, as well as how your baby is responding to these changes. To a certain extent, you can let the child lead this one. Some steps might take longer for your baby to adjust to than others, so go at your own pace.

3) For this approach to be successful, apply these steps to all unnecessary nightwakings. So if you are no longer nursing back your baby back to sleep at nighttime and you are rocking to sleep instead, this means that you need to rock your baby back to sleep throughout the night. And IF you are keeping in a night feed or two, avoid feeding back to sleep—instead, feed the baby until he's done actively eating, break the latch, and continue with the technique you've been using at bedtime to help him fall back asleep, such as rocking to sleep.

4) Only attempt this technique at nighttime at first. This is because there is more sleep pressure at nighttime, making nighttime training easier than naps. Once you're feeling confident with your progress at nighttime, feel free to try tackling naps.