



Sleep in Foster Care and Adoption

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Sleep Advice from the Experts

*Not actual quotations. I made them up.

Thou shalt cosleep
(if you care at all about this special
bond we like to call attachment)

Dr. Sears



Thou shalt cry it out
(if you care at all about ever
having a good night's sleep)

Dr. Ferber



Good night's sleep?
I recommend a good
night's spanking.

Dr. Dobson



Sleep train them now, or
there's a 92% chance they'll
be huffing paint behind a
Quik-E-Mart by age 9

Dr. Weissbluth



Hey little guy ... you look like you need my new \$1,200 robo-cradle

Dr. Karp



Really? Our precious Tyler slept through the night since he was 1 month old ...

That neighbor whose kid would have slept well even if raised by wolves



Never let their feet touch the ground ...

Attachment Therapist



But if she doesn't have floor time, her left brain will never talk to her right brain!

Developmental Movement Therapist



You're spoiling that child - we just let our Jimmy cry. He went to Harvard, you know.

Your Mother-In-Law



Cherish these nighttime bonding moments. Not ever sleeping is such a precious gift ...

APMom on that chat group



Honey ...

The baby's crying ...

Dad



Why don't *you* go cherish this magical moment? Honey.

Mom

What Is This Thing You Call Sleep?



The Ages & Stages of Sleep

Non-REM sleep: restorative, growth

REM sleep: organizing new memories and events, emotional processing

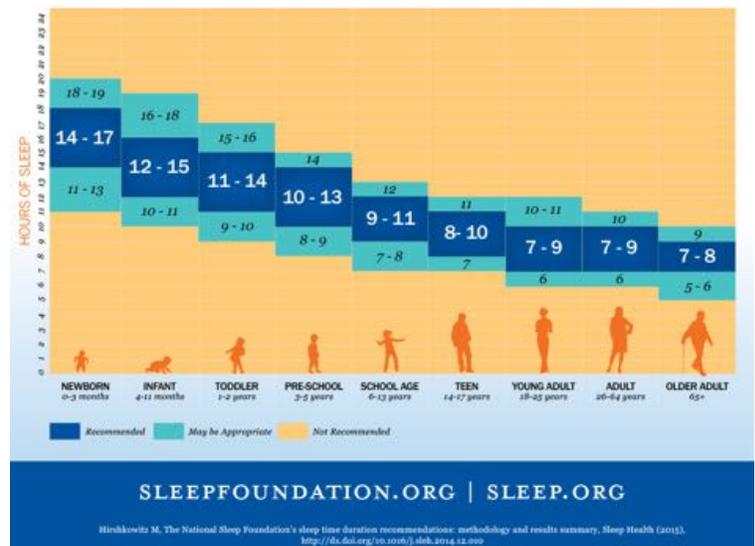
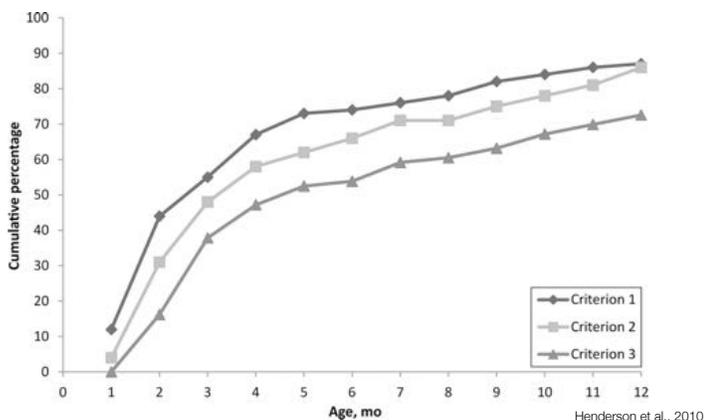
Sleep organization changes with age

The ability to fall asleep and stay asleep is *learned* at developmentally appropriate times

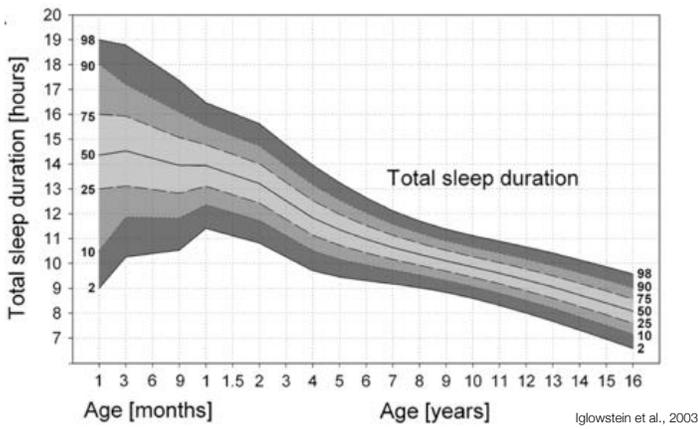
Sleeping through the night? 70% of infants, 47% toddlers, 36% preschoolers, 14% school-age kids have notable wakings

*Don't ask me. I slept 6 hours last night.

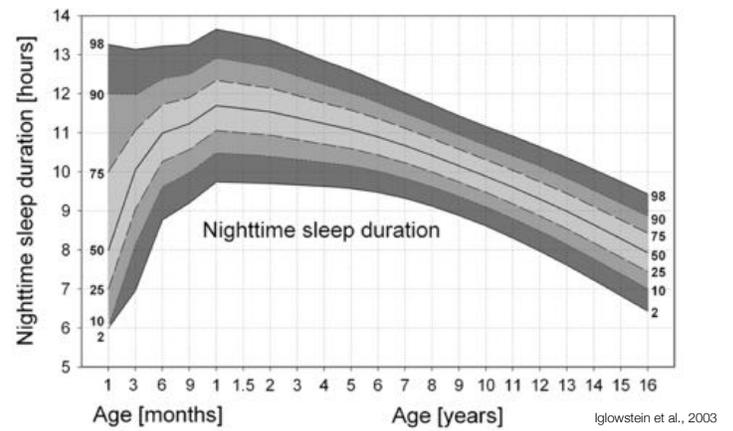
Consolidation of Sleep in First Year



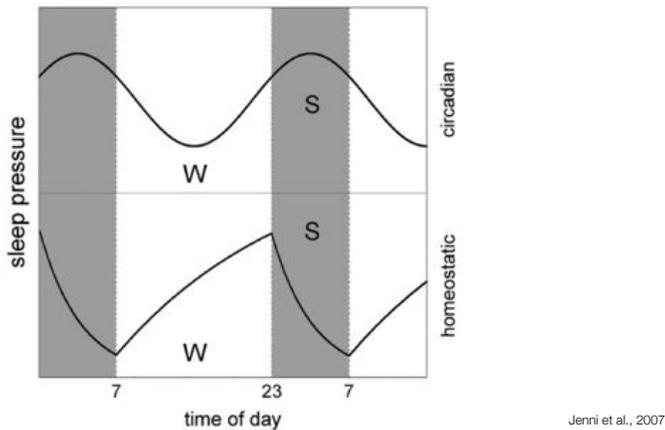
Total Sleep Trends



Nighttime Sleep Trends



Dynamics of Sleep Regulation



Why Bother?



- Fatigue, sleepiness, decreased motivation
- Paradoxical hyperactivity
- Impaired emotional regulation, liability, attention
- Increased **negative mood** (parents too!)
- Family stress
- Growth, obesity, decreased immunity, headaches & bellyaches
- “What a difference an hour makes ...”
(2 grades of neurodevelopment!)

Sleep Issues in Adoption & Foster Care



- Hardly any data on sleep problems in fostered or adopted kids
- The base rate for sleep issues is high (20-30%), across cultures
- One adoption survey found only duration of night wakings varied
- Another found 52% of Chinese adoptees had sleep problems, most minor, with 9% reporting many sleep problems
- Stress and sleep
- Sleep and vigilance are opponent properties
- Is sleep training (“cry-it-out”) OK? When?

Special Concerns in New Placements



- Prior sleep environment and habits
- Overstimulation, stress, and grief
- Separation anxiety
- Developmental catchup, neurodevelopmental spurts
- Fears, anxiety, PTSD
- Sensory processing, emotional regulation, and coping strategies
- Most adoption professionals *feel* that sleep training with prolonged crying should be avoided in the first weeks/months

The Short and the Long of It



Short-Term Plans

- Predictable routines
- Low stimulation, felt safety
- Consistent bedtime
- Emotional and physical availability of parent
- Attuned, patient, serene, confident, flexible

Long Term Plans

- Fade parental presence
- Maintain simple bedtime rituals
- Brief, boring, and minimalist interventions
- Modified sleep training if you like
- Cosleep if you like

Sometimes it's not an "adoption thing."

*Bio kids are hard too.

Developmental Sleep Challenges



- Touchpoints
- Separation anxiety
- Testing limits
- Autonomy
- Night fears
- The dread teenage delayed sleep phase

• Check off any of these activities you did in the HOUR before going to bed.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Read a book							
Used the Computer							
Played with Toys/Games							
Exercised/ Played Sports							
Watched TV							
Played Video Games							
Listened to Music							
Had a Snack							
Took a Bath/ Shower							

Analyze It

Sleep diary at: www.adoptmed.org/sts

A Good Day's Night



- Early morning sunlight
- Regular meal and snack times
- Avoid caffeine and sugary, highly processed foods
- Early afternoon naps or rest periods
- Afternoon exercise
- Rhythms, routines, and rest ... plus all that attachmenty stuff
- Zeitgebers!*

A good night's sleep starts in the morning.

*Actually, the night before. Sleep begets sleep.



Simplicity Parenting

Less is more

Bedtimes and Routines



Bedtime - it's earlier than you think

Falling asleep is like landing a jumbo jet

Watch out for weekend jet lag

Keep bedtimes to within 20 minutes, wake-ups within 1-2 hours

Avoid electronics and vigorous play in the pre-bed hour

Bath, sleepy snack or bottle, PJs, brushing, book, made-up story, prayer, massage, song, audiobook or sleep scripts

Pick 3-4 of those and stick with them, each and every night

Sleep Associations



Sleep associations are critical (positive and negative)

If the sleep association is *you*, your presence will be requested 2-6 times per night

Transitional object or "lovey"

Weaning your presence

Sleep reinforces what precedes it

The bed is for sleep, not sleeplessness

Cosleeping or cosleepless?

The Sleep Environment



TV/computer/phones are the ANTI-sleep

Cozy simple sleep nook, for sleeping only

Is there a place for you, or a place for them in your bedroom?

Light

Sound

Smell

Touch & Temperature

Sleep clock

Behavioral Approaches



Extinction

Graduated extinction

Extinction with parental presence

Positive bedtime routines with faded bedtime and response cost

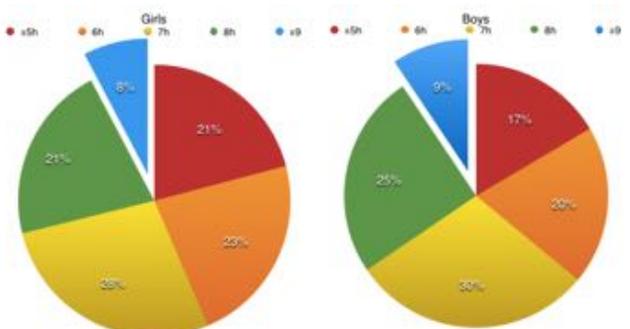
Parent education and prevention

Post-extinction response burst, coercive behavior trap, "signaling"

Get-Out-of-Bed-Free Card, The Sleep Fairy™

Get "Dad" to do it

Adolescents Don't Sleep Enough



Techniques for Adolescents



Insomnia?

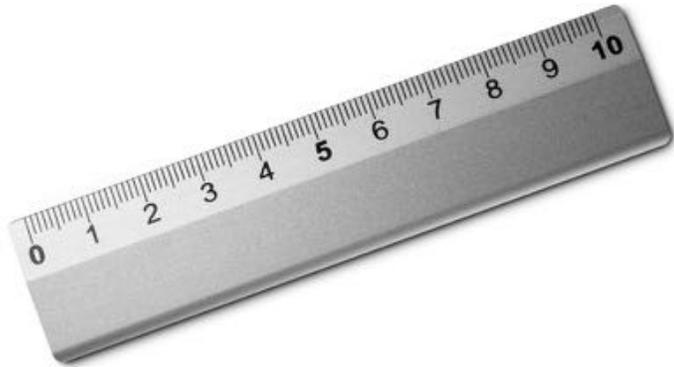
- Sleep hygiene
- Consistent sleep-wake times
- Stimulus control/sleep restriction
- Cognitive restructuring
- Relaxation techniques
- Motivational interviewing

Delayed Sleep Phase?

- Bring bedtime back from usual
- Push it forward by 2-3hrs/night
- Strict sleep-wake schedule, including weekends
- Consider melatonin
- Morning sunlight or lamp

We often know what we need to do.

*So why don't we do it?



Readiness Ruler

- How ready are you to make this change?
- Why not lower?
- Why not higher?

I Wanna Be Sedated

- Benadryl
- Melatonin
- Chamomile, valerian root, lemon balm, Calms-Forte
- Clonidine
- Trazodone
- Hypnotics (benzo and non)
- Seroquel and worse ...
- "Placebology" crossover?



Things That Go ____ In The Night

- Rhythmic movement disorder
- Night fears
- Confusional arousals, sleepwalking, night terrors
- Nightmares
- Snoring
- Bedwetting



Signs of a Sleep Disorder

- Unusual difficulty falling asleep
- Snoring, noisy breathing, breathing pauses while sleeping
- Frequent sleepwalking or very active sleep
- Unusually restless legs at bedtime, involuntary kicking in sleep
- Age-inappropriate sleep/wake times
- Very hard to wake, daytime somnolence, irritability
- Sleep poorly *with and without parent*? Less likely to be "behavioral"
- Talk to your pediatrician, see a pediatric sleep doc, sleep study?



Sleep Advice from Me

*My kids were terrible sleepers. We did everything wrong.

Sleep Resources

[The Happy Sleeper](#), Turgeon & Wright

[Sleepless in America](#), Kurcinka

[Sleeping Through the Night](#), Mindell

[Simplicity Parenting](#), Payne

babysleep.com

drcraigcanapari.com

Sleep diaries, links, books, this talk at: www.adoptmed.org/sts

In Review

Inform your instincts and trust them

Consider your child's background, and stay attuned

A good night's sleep starts in the morning

Keep it simple: routine, rhythm, and ritual

Your kids may be more adaptable than you think

Give any new sleep approach a week to work

Behavioral approaches first

Screens are the anti-sleep

Take action in the community: school start times and homework load

