

Nurturing Naps



A Simple, Stress-Free Guide
to Infant Sleep

No Schedules • No Pressure



THE NURTURE DUO

Reframing Naps

- ◆ Naps aren't something to *perfect*.
- ◆ They are about supporting your baby's *biology*.
- ◆ There is a wide range of *normal*, and your baby is not meant to fit a rigid schedule.

lets get into it.



Is This Normal?

- ✓ **Short naps** – Babies often take shorter naps due to *immature sleep architecture*, waking after one sleep cycle.
- ✓ **Contact naps** – Support connection, regulation, and brain development for both you and your baby.
- ✓ **Feeding to sleep** – A soothing, *biologically normal* way to help your baby settle and co-regulate.
- ✓ **Movement to sleep** – Rocking, stroller rides, or gentle motion can provide the sensory input babies need to help them relax and drift off.
- ✓ **Needing extra support suddenly** – It's normal for babies to need more *co-regulation* during developmental changes, teething, or periods of separation anxiety.

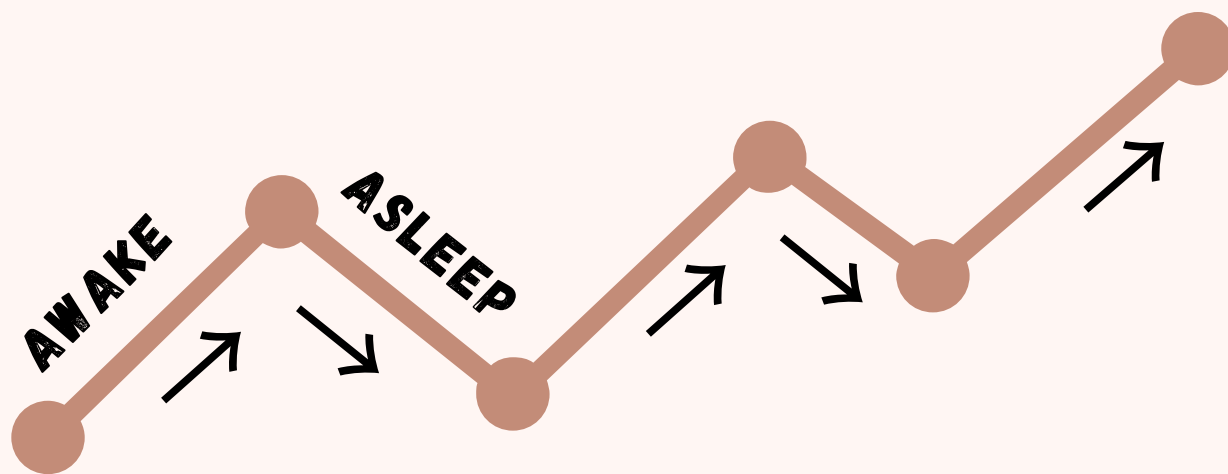
All of this is normal — not a problem to fix.



Purpose of Naps

Naps relieve sleep pressure.

Sleep pressure builds the longer we're awake, during play, movement etc. As your baby grows, they will naturally tolerate longer periods of being awake.



While your baby sleeps, sleep pressure releases helping them wake up feeling refreshed.



How Many Naps?

Every baby is unique, and nap needs can change from day to day. Growth spurts, developmental milestones, and night sleep all play a role in how often and how long your little one naps. Wake windows can be a helpful guide, but your baby doesn't follow the clock. Tune in to their cues and go with the flow.

The age-based chart below can offer gentle guidance, while remembering that some days your baby may need a little more rest, and other days a little less. This is a general nap pattern. It's ok if your baby doesn't fit into a category perfectly.

Age	Avg. Time Napping	Avg. # Naps	Avg. Time Awake
1 month	5-6 hours	3-4+	30-60 min
3 months	4-5 hours	3-4	1-2 h
6 months	3-4 hours	2-3	2-3 h
9 months	2-3 hours	2	2-3 h
12 months	2-3 hours	1-2	3-4 h

(Igalowstein et al., 2003).



How Long?

- ◆ Babies' sleep cycles are about 30–60 minutes—short naps are completely normal
- ◆ After one cycle, babies often wake for a quick “needs check”
- ◆ Young babies need help linking cycles and co-regulation is a normal part of infant sleep
- ◆ Longer naps develop naturally over time
- ◆ A 30-minute nap isn't a failure—sometimes it's exactly what your baby needs to relieve sleep pressure



Cues vs. Schedules

Your baby isn't a robot.

They are a unique human with their own rhythms and sleep needs.

Sleep pressure builds differently for every baby, so rigid schedules don't always line up with what their body needs.

Often, the earliest signs of sleep aren't obvious—subtle shifts like zoning out, losing interest, or a change in attention can be your baby's way of saying they're getting ready for sleep.



Tired Cues

Early cues

Red eyebrows
Averts eye contact
Turns head
Blank staring

Tired cues

Yawning
Eye rubbing
Pulling on ears/hair
Sucking fingers
Fussy mood
Seeking hugs
Clumsiness

Late tired cues

Intense crying
Arched back
Hands in fist

Late tired cues

Arched back
Emotional
Hyperactive



Nap Transitions

Signs Your Baby is Ready to Drop a Nap

Longer Time Awake

Your baby can stay alert and happy for longer stretches than before.

Nap Resistance

Naps take more than 15–20 minutes to settle, or they refuse them altogether.

Transition Days Vary

Some days will feel easy, others tricky. This is a normal adjustment, not a regression.

Tips to Navigate

Stay flexible and watch their cues.

Adjust your day around their needs. Naps and bedtime will vary during this period, and that's ok.



Troubleshooting Naps

Reset

- ◆ If your baby is taking longer than 15–20 minutes to fall asleep, it's often a sign they're not ready
- ◆ Change the scenery, get some fresh air and reconnect through play
- ◆ When your baby shows sleepy cues again, try once more

Get curious

- ➔ Are they ready to drop a nap?
- ➔ Are they overstimulated?
- ➔ Are they going through a developmental shift?

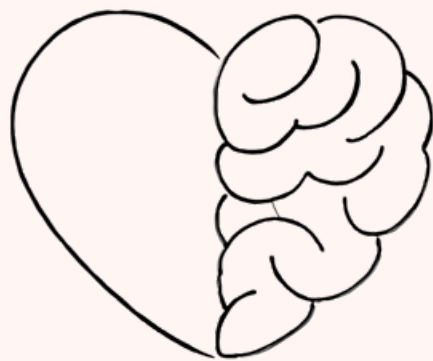
Keep this in mind

You can't force sleep—but you can create a safe, supportive space for your baby to rest when they're ready.



**Your baby's sleep isn't
something you need to control,
it's something you *get* to learn.**

Embracing this mindset is so *freeing*.



THE NURTURE DUO

Still feeling unsure?

*You don't have to figure it out alone.
We're here to support you every step of the way.*



*Book a free 15 minute clarity call to learn more
about our 1:1 nurtured sleep support packages.*

[chat with us](#)