



Partly cloudy and -12°C

February 5, 2007

Select Your Region...

ARTICLE SEARCH

ADVANCED SEARCH

- HOME
- NEWS
- SPORTS
- LIFESTYLE
- AUTOMOTIVE
- CUSTOMER SERVICE
- CLASSIFIED
- LINKS

NEWS SPORTS LIFESTYLE CLASSIFIED CUSTOMER SERVICE AUTOMOTIVE

Home | Blogs | Calendars | Cartoons | City Services | Columns | Contests | Editorial | Letters | Traffic Cams | Video

LINKS

- ▶ Ask the Professionals
- ▶ Automotive
- ▶ Municipal Elections
- ▶ Centre Of The City
- ▶ GTAOpenhouses
- ▶ insidetorontoAUCTION
- ▶ Metroland
- ▶ Mapquest
- ▶ Reader's Choice
- ▶ Stand Up Scarborough
- ▶ Toronto Business Times
- ▶ 411 GTA

Save up to
50% OFF
www.homeshowfurniture.ca

CLOSING SALE
EVERYTHING
MUST GO
BY FEBRUARY 15

A good night's sleep for baby ... and you!

Sleep training can start as early as four months

Lisa Day
Jan. 16, 2007

Nicky Cohen wants to make one thing clear - parents know what's best for their children and when it comes to sleep, and their ability to handle the lack of it, parents must do what they think it is right.

But the best time for parents to start teaching their children good sleeping habits is when their babies are four to five months old. By the time their child is a toddler, "bad habits are more ingrained" and it can take between two to three weeks of consistent, but gradual training to re-teach them how to sleep. A four-month-old can learn good sleeping habits in up to five days.

Ninety per cent of sleeping problems in young children are behavioural, said Cohen, a midtown Toronto clinical psychologist who is currently registering with the College of Psychologists and who specializes in pediatric sleep.

Despite that high number, there is little help in Toronto for parents looking to get a good night's sleep. Other than a few hospital-based programs, parents with children who have sleep disturbances are on their own.

Cohen herself experienced the lack of resources in 2003 when her now three-and-a-half-year-old was having troubles sleeping. Cohen said she was fortunate to track down noted clinical psychologist Jodi Mindell, who offered Cohen her help. It was then that Cohen decided to specialize in a field in which medical doctors are only given up to three hours of training.

The main types of behavioural nighttime problems involving sleep include night waking, early morning awakenings and nighttime fears. Nighttime problems can also include parasomnia behaviours such as sleep terrors and sleepwalking, but these problems are often hereditary (80 to 90 per cent of children who have partial arousals or parasomnia activities usually have a family member who has experienced this as well) or a result of lifestyle factors such as sleep deprivation.

Before attempting to train babies to sleep, Cohen said parents must rule out medical problems such as reflux, a common medical condition among babies that can cause discomfort.

"Don't do sleep training until you get medical problems under control. You can't do it when (babies) are sick."

Once medical problems have been ruled out, Cohen said parents must teach babies how to fall asleep independently.

Babies often wake up at night and can't fall back to sleep because they simply do not know how, Cohen said. Often babies get into a routine where they require something to put them to sleep - rocking, nursing or walking. In addition to not knowing how to fall asleep without assistance, something called self-soothing, they also get confused when they have fallen asleep in one place, for example their parent's arms, and have woken up in another, like their crib.

"(Babies) don't know how to fall asleep, they don't have the skill," Cohen said.

Babies can't be taught how to self-soothe before four months of age. But by age four to five months, babies can be taught how to fall asleep on their own.

Email Print

Imagine your
CNL
Company Name
and Logo

YOU JUST PROVED banner advertising works.

Contact us today to start reaching millions of potential customers.

Click [HERE](#) to learn how to help babies learn to fall asleep independently.

Click [HERE](#) to learn about early morning awakenings.

Click [HERE](#) to learn how you can stop nighttime feedings.



Copyright 1996-2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd. All rights reserved. The reproduction, modification, transmission or reproduction of any material from insidetoronto.com is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Metroland Media Group Ltd.
click here to read the [Toronto Community News Privacy Policy](#)

