

## PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

# *for the adventure of family life*



## 10\_Where should my baby sleep?

When a child is born, every parent has many questions. One of these questions is: Should the child sleep in the parents' bedroom? And what to do if it does not fall asleep easily?

**On the subject of where the child should sleep, there are only individual answers.**

Historically, children have never had their own room. This only started a few decades ago in our culture. Before, it was taken for granted that children slept in the same room as their parents. If we look at the animal world, it is the case with many animals that the little ones stay in the warm, parental nest for a very long time before they are big enough to move out. We can transfer this image to our children. This does not mean, however, that children should stay in their parents' room until adolescence. As long as the child is being breastfed, it is probably the most practical thing to have the child with you in your bed or in the crib next to it. But even slightly older children often have the wish not to sleep alone - just like us adults often do.

Many daily impressions are processed in the brain, especially at night. Troubled dreams and crying out are common. It is good for children to feel their mother or father, the warming skin, the calm heartbeat, breathing - just like in the womb.

**However, with the child in bed, some adults cannot sleep well.**

Some mothers and fathers wake up at the slightest sound of the child. In this case, it makes sense to put the child in another room. Parents themselves must decide: With which solution do they feel most comfortable? However, if you feel guilty about putting the child in another room, the child will sense this and possibly cry. Some parents cannot sleep well with a child in bed because they do not have enough space for themselves. You could take the child, who is looking for comfort and warmth during the night, to your bed and when it has calmed down, lay it on an adjacent mattress on the floor. It is always important to find a solution where all family members can sleep well and regenerate. Parents should definitely follow their feelings. There is no right or wrong here, just personal choices.

**40 percent of all children have problems falling asleep.**

If the baby or toddler does not fall asleep immediately, then you should remain as relaxed as possible. Peace and serenity are the magic words anyway. How are the parents themselves when they put their child to bed? Are they calm and balanced or irritable, overtired and fixated on falling asleep quickly? Experience shows it is worth becoming calm inside, letting go of expectations and going to bed with as few preconceptions as possible. Adults also find it difficult to relax and fall asleep if their partner is restless, irritable or even angry next to them. We feel the tension in our fellow human beings. In the same way, the child can feel how the parents are doing.

**Calm yourself.**

The best thing parents can do when putting their child to bed is consciously enjoy the time with the child. Rituals that are always the same give the child security and calm. Children often react to this by actually falling asleep faster. Of course, it's not possible to be calm and balanced every night, so it makes sense to let the calmer parent take care of the bedtime. You can also say to an older child: "I am very tired tonight and still tense from the day. Could you do me a favour and go to bed alone tonight?" This works quite well, provided you say it without guilt, but as authentically as possible.

Children can't fall asleep at the push of a button - nor can adults. Parents can create a calm, safe environment and allow themselves to radiate calm.

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