



Nap Independence Options

A Choice-Centered Guide for Daytime Postpartum Support

Purpose:

This document is designed to introduce a range of commonly used approaches for supporting independent naps. It recognizes that babies and families are different, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to sleep.

Disclaimer: *This document is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It does not replace medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Families are encouraged to consult with their pediatrician or a qualified healthcare provider regarding any medical concerns related to infant sleep or development. Methods vary in structure, responsiveness, and pacing. Families are encouraged to consider their baby's age, temperament, and developmental readiness, and to choose an approach that aligns with their comfort level and parenting philosophy.*

Option 1: Gradual Transition / Fading Method

Description: Baby continues to receive support (holding, rocking, feeding), and that support is slowly reduced over time.

What this may look like: - Holding until baby is drowsy, then laying baby down - Rocking less each day - Transitioning from full holding to hands-on soothing in the crib

Crying level: Minimal to mild fussing

Best for: Parents who prefer the gentlest approach and want to avoid crying

Option 2: Pick-Up / Put-Down Method

Description: Baby is placed down awake. If baby cries, they are picked up, soothed, and then placed back down once calm.

What this may look like: - Lay baby down awake - Pick up if crying escalates
- Repeat as needed until baby settles

Crying level: Intermittent crying with immediate response

Best for: Parents who want responsiveness with some structure

Option 3: Stay-Nearby / Chair Method

Description: Baby is placed in the crib awake while the caregiver remains nearby for reassurance.

What this may look like: - Caregiver sits next to the crib during naps - Uses voice reassurance instead of holding - Gradually increases distance over days

Crying level: Mild to moderate, with caregiver present

Best for: Babies transitioning from constant contact who need reassurance

Option 4: Assisted-to-Independent Transfer

Description: Baby falls asleep while being held and is transferred to the crib. Over time, baby is placed down earlier in the sleep process.

What this may look like: - Holding until asleep, then laying down - Gradually laying baby down while drowsy instead of fully asleep

Crying level: Minimal

Best for: Families wanting a slow transition from contact naps

Option 5: Routine-Focused (No Formal Sleep Training)

Description: Focuses on creating consistent nap routines and recognizing sleep cues without pushing independence.

What this may look like: - Following age-appropriate wake windows - Using a consistent pre-nap routine - Supporting sleep however baby needs

Crying level: Minimal

Best for: Parents who want structure without changing sleep habits quickly

Option 6: Cry-Based Methods (Awareness Only)

Description: Includes methods such as Cry-It-Out or timed check-ins. These are typically recommended for older babies.

Important note: This option is listed for awareness only and is not automatically implemented.

Crying level: High

Best for: Families who may explore this later with professional guidance