

This is often what babies can find a little tricky. They will initially need help to settle with things like dummies, feeding, rocking, patting or being walked around. This is perfectly ok to use, but this can sometimes be counterproductive as they get older. This is because they may not be able to settle without those “sleep props” or “sleep cues” and will always need your assistance to fall asleep using those cues.

The most common sleep cue is breast or bottle feeding your baby. So, where possible, try and put them down awake or drowsy rather than fully asleep, so they can do that last little bit of falling asleep themselves.

## Commonly used settling cues:

- **Dummies** - the advice around dummies is to not use them prior to breastfeeding being established (if you are breastfeeding), and if you are using a dummy, it should be offered for ALL sleep (naps and night-time). It is also recommended that dummies are removed between 6-12 months old.
- **Contact naps** - Contact naps are lovely with a newborn. They help you feel close to your baby and build a bond. Just make sure you stay awake and don't fall asleep with your baby in an armchair/on the sofa. If you are also tired and want to sleep, go to the bedroom, place your baby in their cot, and sleep next to them.
- **Feeding** - Feeding to sleep is also very common, especially in newborns. This could be breastfeeding or bottle feeding. Feeding cues to watch and listen out for are sucking fingers, restlessness and murmuring. If you can offer your baby a feed on hearing those cues, you are less likely to get upset and distressed and find it difficult to settle after feeding.
- **Movement** - The next commonly used settling cue is movement, for example, rocking or bouncing, swaying and the pram/car.



Whilst there are common strategies that may support the sleep of babies and children, there are also different parenting and professional styles that may favour one approach over another. There is no single solution that will suit everyone. The advice contained in these downloads is for general information purposes only and is intended to give you some basic tips and strategies. Our advice is NOT intended to be a substitute for medical advice or treatment.

