
THE 4 MONTH SLEEP REGRESSION

- *WHAT IS IT*
 - *WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE*
 - *HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THROUGH IT*
 - *WHEN TO REACH OUT FOR HELP*
-





The '4 Month Sleep Regression' is actually a change in your child's sleep cycle. Your newborn had 2 stages of sleep (Deep and REM), with this new progression of sleep development happening around the 4 month mark, your child will gain an additional two levels of Light sleep at the beginning of their sleep cycle; they will then have 4 stages of sleep: Stage 1, Stage 2, Deep Sleep and REM Sleep.



***A progression in
sleep***

STAGES OF THE SLEEP CYCLE



STAGE 1: DOZING OFF

The first stage of sleep is Light and may not even look like your child is asleep; however they are already on their sleep journey in stage one of sleep. This is a very active stage of sleep where your child may look "drowsy" or as if they are just "touching" sleep.

STAGE 2: LIGHT SLEEP

In stage 2 sleep, your child may actually appear to be sleeping, with reduced brain activity and muscles beginning to relax, as well as a slow down of breathing and heart rates. Your child can be easily woken up in this sleep stage.



STAGE 3: SLOW WAVE/ DEEP SLEEP

This deep sleep is where you may find your child is difficult to wake and their body is fully relaxed. Here is where Human Growth Hormone is released and their immune systems fire up for full body restoration.

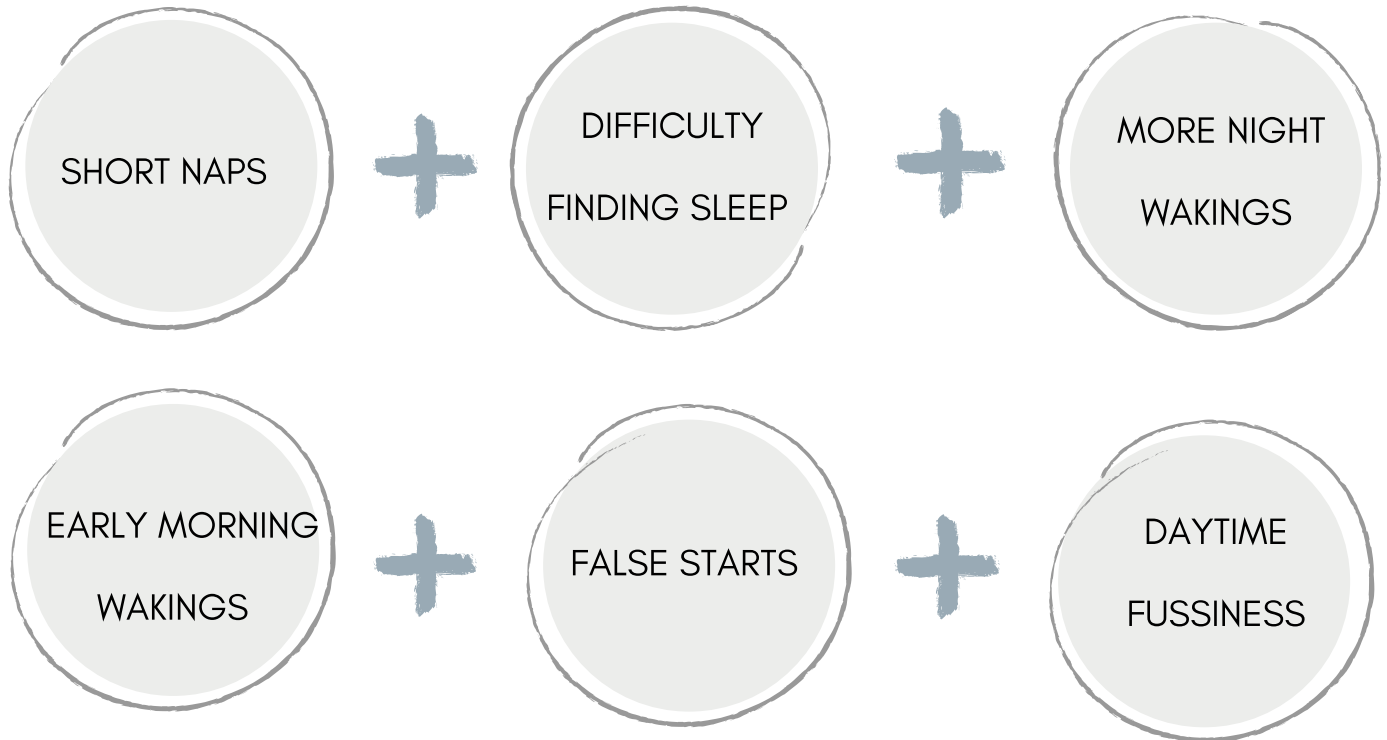
STAGE 4: REM SLEEP

REM (Rapid Eye Movement) Sleep's hallmark is the movement behind your child's eyes while the rest of their body remains relatively still. Here is where your child's brain activity increases again working hard in areas such as memory, learning and creativity.



• NEWBORNS ONLY HAVE DEEP AND REM SLEEP UNTIL AROUND AGE 4 MONTHS WHEN THEY GAIN STAGE 1 & 2, WHICH WE THEN CARRY THROUGH ADULTHOOD.

WHAT DOES THE 4 MONTH REGRESSION LOOK LIKE:



WHEN DOES THIS HAPPEN?

While we typically use the standard 4 month mark as the time frame in which this progression occurs, it can show up late in the 3rd month of life or even closer to the 5th month for some babies.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THROUGH THIS CHANGE



1

AVOID OVERTIREDNESS:

With extra night wakings and short naps, it is easy for your child to become overtired. Use your motion assisted naps to help assist with daytime sleep as needed. You can always bring bedtime up earlier (even as early as 6:30!) if you have had a short nap day.

2

BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR ROUTINE:

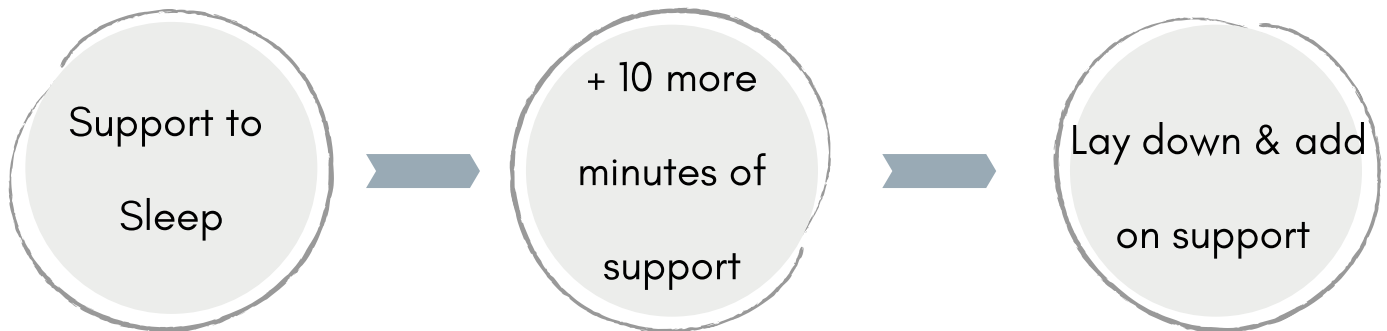
When your child is going through a big change, like this progression of sleep, it is imperative to remain consistent in your daily and sleep routines. This creates a sense of security for your child, allowing them to feel confident as they maneuver through these changes.

3

DARK SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Create a dark sleep environment for your child, especially for naps. Less stimuli from light might help them traverse the transition between sleep cycles with a little more ease and less interruption .

ASSIST TO SLEEP



With the introduction of 2 extra LIGHT stages of sleep, you may notice it takes more time or more effort to help your baby work through those stages and into a deeper level of sleep. IF assisting your child to sleep, I suggest offering your baby about 10 EXTRA minutes of support to allow your child to not be woken up by being put down TOO EARLY. Being put down for a sleep too early in the sleep cycle can cause your baby to wake up more easily from these lighter stages of sleep and unfortunately then taking LONGER to fall asleep again, or perhaps not even at all.

When your baby's body feels heavy/is without movement or when their breathing slows down, you can feel confident in transitioning them to their sleep space if you wish. I would suggest laying them down FEET-BUM-HEAD or laying them down on their sides first and then rolling them gently to their backs. This can help reduce stimulation upon the transition. Please feel free to add on additional help while baby is lying in their sleep space if needed by providing touch or voice comforts if they do rouse a little on the switch.

PROTECTING INDEPENDENCE



For babies who have begun to learn the skill of putting themselves to sleep independently, it can feel like a real challenge to maintain that independence when you are maneuvering through the 4 Month Sleep Regression. Here are some suggestions to help balance protect that independence while still

GETTING SOME SLEEP:

- Protect HOW baby falls asleep, even if your baby has a shorter nap or another night waking than usual. Continue to focus on HOW baby falls asleep, not necessarily the length of each sleep.
- Alternate between Independent put-downs and Assisted Naps during the day.
- If baby struggles between sleep cycles, you can offer assistance for your baby as they remain in their sleep space by providing vocal or touch comforts as they lay horizontally to help smooth out the transition from one cycle to the next.
- Be hyper aware of your baby looking DROWSY or DOZY (essentially stage 1 of sleep), and put them down to sleep BEFORE they get to this stage. This is where Sleep Associations are formed and solidified.

OK... WE NEED HELP!



This time can feel very challenging for both baby and parent. It is easy to get frustrated when sleep gets bumpy. Just because this progression is **NORMAL**, doesn't mean it is easy! We can't always fix everything for our children but we can be there to guide and support them when things get hard. If you are still struggling with sleep after 2-4 weeks of noting signs of the regression, it might be time reach out for some extra help.

Bumps are one thing... prolonged sleep deprivation is another.

REACHING OUT FOR HELP:

When sleep bumps are lingering for more than 2 weeks, I encourage families to do a **'check in' of how things are working for them**. IF things are *NOT* working, it might be time for a touch in with a sleep coach. Varying levels of support are available per each family's sleep goals.