



Routines

Whether or not you like routines, research has found that children thrive on them. They need consistency and predictability to understand their world and feel safe and secure in their environment. In saying that, the first 2–3 months of a newborn's life can be totally unpredictable, so try not to force a strict routine when eating, feeding and sleeping is the main priority.

In the beginning it's good to try setting up a very basic routine with your baby of eating, playing and sleeping in this order. This will help you later down the track when you are trying to establish a more solid routine. However if this doesn't work don't give yourself a hard time about it, sometimes you just need to do what you can to get through.

Flexibility is the key during these first few months. After this time when things have settled down it's important to discuss with your partner how you would both like things to go, and what part each of you will play. You may decide to always be home for an 11:00am baby nap, and fit your social life around that or you may say you'll go out on Friday nights but stick to a bedtime routine the other nights. Partners tend to feel connected if they can have certain roles like feeding and/or bathing. Dividing tasks and knowing what part you play and when you get a chance to rest is important. Of course this can change, but having set responsibilities can help in the first couple of years to make it easier for everyone to know what to do. Remember, every family is different and everyone has a different idea of what routine means.

Sleep is the most important part of the daily routine so try to get it established early, as this affects the entire family. For more on this please see the links. If you are really struggling and not getting enough sleep, perhaps talk to your GP about getting some professional help. Most states have a funded in-house baby sleep school program and they should be able to refer you.