

TINY BITS (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER) FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
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Rocking and Rolling: Caring for the Mental Health of Infants and Toddlers

Rocking with your baby

Rocking a baby to sleep helps them accomplish many things they cannot physically do on their own, like regulating their digestion. Rocking is also a natural way to soothe, comfort, and help a child fall asleep (and a reason they calm down so quickly in baby bouncers and baby swings). It can be discouraging if you struggle to rock your baby to sleep, especially considering all the benefits. So, here are several tips to keep in mind the next time you are rocking your baby.

Learning new things takes time — for adults, and for babies — so try not to let your partner jump in immediately if rocking, at first, is not going the way you hoped. If you want to be the go-to rocker in your household, you will want to stick with it and practice a lot.

The key is to pay attention to the child: Follow the baby's signals. Do what keeps them calm.

If a certain rocking method calms a child, it is working. Aside from dangerous movements, there is no "wrong" way to rock a baby to sleep if it is meeting the end goal.

Rolling, in the form of routines, with your toddler

Young children often beg for repetition—reading the same book over and over or wanting to wear the same t-shirt for a week. Repetition, in the form of routines, has many mental health benefits for children, decreasing stress and helping children handle emotions. Even teens and adults experience mental health benefits from having routines.

Routines helps children feel safe; help build independence and can decrease power struggles.

Two great tips:

1. Set a schedule. Try to keep a similar schedule every day.
2. Keep it simple: Creating routines does not have to be complicated.

When children have consistent and predictable routines, they are more likely to do what is expected of them. Routines help us know what to expect from a situation, which helps us feel in control and can decrease feelings of anxiety. For young children, routines are particularly helpful around times of separation such as leaving a child at a babysitter's or tucking them in to bed at night

Excerpt: [Rocking and Rolling. Caring for the Mental Health of Infants and Toddlers | NAEYC](#)

Excerpt: [How Routines Help Kids' Mental Health - On Our Sleeves](#)

