

Chapter 26: The Childs Sleep and Freedom of Movement

During the first few weeks after the birth, the child sleeps most of the time. Approximately a new born sleeps for about 20 hours in a full day, but progressively the duration of waking hours increases. The need for total rest and sleep for a baby cannot be over stressed. Too much disturbance and noise makes the child restless and fidgety. The child prefers a peaceful environment so that it can sleep comfortably.

Too much hugging, kissing and shifting from the arms of one person to another and bringing in too many visitors to see the baby will upset its tranquility. Noisy environment and blaring sounds of television and radio might affect the delicate nerves of the child. The sound sleep of the child should not be disturbed by careless behavior. It should not be moved around unnecessarily. If this practice is continued, over a period of time, the child will become short-tempered, excitable and peevish.

The newly born baby dislikes noisy surroundings and getting moved around. Care has to be exercised to see that its environment is kept noise free and the child is moved around only when it is absolutely necessary. The child prefers to be on the mother's lap or in its cradle, delicately swung, which makes it feel comfortable.

With the motion of the cradle the child feels that some caring person is around. If there is total quiet and there is no movement the child feels lonely. This is more so because the mother's womb is a cradle in which the child keeps moving and when it arrives in the world, it wants to move too. The mother's sweet lullabies too comfort the baby.

The child's first year in the world is the period for the exercise of its body and limbs. The child likes movement for which it throws around the limbs. For this purpose the garments of the baby have to be loose fitting and of soft fabric. Tying up a child in many layers of clothing will impede its free movement and will have ill effect on its nerves. Such children have no other alternative than crying which will be the precursor of rebellious and angry nature.

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