



THE SLEEP DPT

Contact Naps

One of the greatest concerns that it seems most parents have these days are contact naps. “My baby won’t let me put her down!” They are worried that their baby will never fall asleep on their own, especially since they’ve been told to put them down “drowsy, but awake” and “in their own crib” to get the most “restorative sleep.” Yes – there are a lot of quotations there. First off, let me tell you that it doesn’t matter what type of external environment you’re in – that’s not going to affect whether you’re in NREM or REM stages of sleep (unless for some reason you’re flailing in your sleep and hit something that wakes you up that you wouldn’t bump into in a crib). That scare tactic is exactly what it sounds like, a scare tactic. Your baby was just inside of you for 9 months and they simply are being a NORMAL and healthy baby, wanting to stay close to their home (YOU!). Babies are not meant to be separate from us for months, our culture has changed over time to make this seem normal, but let’s face it – the cultures before us had so many others to help them care for a child, the mother wasn’t rushing back to work, it wasn’t just one or two people helping a child thrive. Most of this talk of where a baby should nap comes from white male pediatricians from the 1920s-1940s who likely weren’t actually caring for a child much themselves! That being said, there are a few things you can do to help with these:



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- Accept it. Set a space up with your phone, a book, listen to a podcast, eat a snack. Relax and enjoy those snuggles!
- If you are going to try for a nap in the crib, try the first nap only. If the baby wakes early, you can always try to extend it in your arms or nurse them back to sleep until they get accustomed to this. You can also ease this transition by starting a nap spot on the floor where you move them off of you, lay next to them and then roll away
- Use a baby carrier. This allows you to move around and be free (maybe even go for a walk) yet still allows your child to be close to you. Not to mention, there are so many sensory benefits here!