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## **Book Review**

### *Sleeping Like a Baby*

**By Pinky McKay**

**Penguin Books, Australia, 2006**

**Reviewed by Rosemary Gordon**

This is an easy-to-read, reader-friendly book aimed at both those who need reassurance that their baby's sleeping (or non-sleeping) patterns are nothing to worry about, and for those who are desperate to get some sleep. As is quoted in the book, "People who say they sleep like a baby, usually don't have one!"

The author is very clearly not in favour of "controlled crying", which she describes as not being evidence-based practice, and agrees with James McKenna that it is "social ideology masquerading as science." Nobody has studied exactly how long it is safe to leave a baby to cry, if at all.

Crying should be regarded as a form of communication and not a sign of manipulation. The author points out that most infant sleep charts were compiled many years ago when breastfeeding rates were at their lowest, so those observations were based on mostly formula-fed babies, sleeping by themselves under laboratory study conditions.

The main message of the book seems to be, "Watch your baby and follow his/her lead."

If you are trying to change your baby's sleep patterns, the three basic things to consider are:

- your child's safety
- is what you are trying to do respectful?
- think about the bigger picture and what messages you want to send to your child about sleep

There are chapters on what sleep patterns to expect of babies and toddlers at different ages and stages, where your baby sleeps and how to set safe sleep rules, and co-sleeping. The chapter on feeding is mostly about breastfeeding because Pinky of course unashamedly states that breastfeeding is best.

There are also chapters on how to cope with problems like colic, reflux and teething, which can disrupt sleep patterns, as well as one on the need to look after yourself before you can look after others. There are tips for simplifying your life, getting as much rest as possible, taking time for yourself, finding a support group, and finding help.

There is a list of useful contacts and resources. These are mostly Australian, but a few New Zealand ones are listed too, including LLLNZ. There are also suggestions for further reading and a useful index.

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