

# Infant Sleep Program

## Camping Out Method

### How does it work?

- Make sure there is a good bedtime routine in place
- This is a more gradual and gentle technique to teach babies to fall asleep by themselves. However it takes longer than controlled comforting and therefore requires more parental energy and stamina!
- Camping out involves placing a bed or chair next to the baby's cot.
- The parent sits or lies next to their baby and pats or strokes them off to sleep. When the baby is asleep, the parent can leave the room.
- When the baby is used to falling asleep like this (usually three nights), the parent sits by the bed until the baby falls asleep but does not touch the baby.
- When the baby is used to falling asleep like this (usually three nights), the parent moves their chair or bed a foot away from the cot and remains in their chair or bed until the baby falls asleep.
- The bed or chair is then gradually moved to the doorway and out of the baby's room over a period of one to three weeks.
- If the baby wakes overnight, the parent returns to the chair or bed and stays there until their baby goes back to sleep.

### A few important points about camping out:

- When sitting/lying next to the baby, keep things quiet. Do not talk to or play with the baby.
- Try to avoid making interactive eye contact with the baby.
- Some babies can get very angry that parents are not picking them up.
- Try to resist picking them up – otherwise it will reinforce the habit.
- Babies will eventually learn that parents are there to be with them, but not to pick them up.

### What about the day sleeps?

- If parents are doing camping out at night, they should also be doing camping out during the day. This means the baby (and the parents) will be less confused about the program!
- If a baby wakes up from a day sleep after less than an hour, the parent should try to re-settle their baby for another 15–20 minutes – again using camping out. If after that time the baby has not gone back to sleep, they should pick their baby up and try again later.