

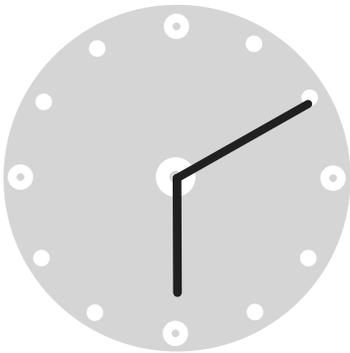
Getting Baby on a Schedule

Until your baby is about two months old, she is still trying to adjust to life outside the womb. So, trying to get her on a schedule before the two-month mark will likely just lead to frustration. By 3 or 4 months, however, a baby is more ready for a routine.



Let your baby take the lead

Keep a journal of when your baby starts fussing to nurse or shows signs of sleepiness, as well as what times of the day he's most alert. Then you can begin to anticipate his needs in advance and build a daily schedule from there. For instance, if you notice your baby tends to get hungry around 11:00 each morning, you can start preparing to nurse him a little before that.



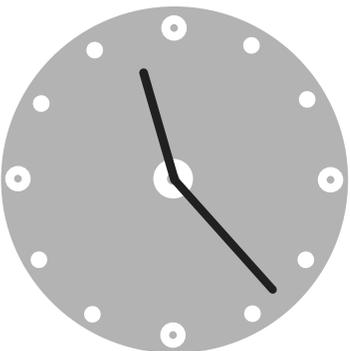
Be prepared to make changes as your baby grows

As your baby grows, her needs will change. She'll go from nursing every three hours to eating three meals a day. Each small shift may require a change in your routine.



Sticking to the schedule

If you're working all day, you may not have much time to spend with your baby between picking her up and putting her to bed. If your day starts early, your baby will likely be ready to go down by about 6:30 at night. Even though you want to spend time with your baby, if your child is exhausted, it's best to put her to bed. She'll be a lot happier if you do.



Establishing a routine can help you feel calmer and more organized. It also helps your baby by making sure his needs are being met. Just remember, setting up a schedule is different for every family, so be patient and experiment until you find out what works for you and your baby.

Call 800-CHILDREN (800-244-5373) for more information.

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