

API Responds to Time Magazine Article

I'm writing in response to your article in the December 7 issue entitled "The Year in Health, A to Z. B is for Babies." I respectfully but passionately disagree with the statements and research cited to support the notion that babies who fall asleep alone, sleep much better. A vast body of research contradicts this premise.

Research from Canada shows that infants who receive parental attention following waking and crying return to sleep more readily than those receiving delayed attention or whose signals receive no parental response. (Ranson, K.E., & Urichuk, L.J., The effect of parent-child attachment relationships on child biopsychosocial outcomes: a review. *Early Child Development and Care*, 178,129-53). Dr. William Sears, renowned pediatrician and author of many parenting books, explains the psychology and physiology of infant sleep in his web article at <http://www.askdrsears.com/HTML/7/T070200.ASP>. He stresses the physiological importance of parenting children to sleep, in order to create a sleep environment that helps a baby through the vulnerable periods of light sleep and reenter deep sleep without fully awakening. He shows why encouraging a baby to sleep too deeply, too soon, may not be in the best survival or developmental interest of the baby.

Dr. James J. McKenna, Director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame, is a world-renowned expert on infant sleep. Among many other principles that support co-sleeping, his extensive body of research shows that infants are born with only 25% of their adult brain volumes. This means that infants are neurologically the most immature infant primate of all, the slowest developing and most reliant on adults for the longest period of time, in order to get psychological regulation and support.

Many, many research studies show that stress hormones are lower in mothers and babies who sleep near each other, especially cortisol, which is essential for a baby's healthy growth. The physiology of babies who sleep near parents is more stable, including temperatures, heart rhythms, and fewer long pauses in breathing. In long-term follow-up studies of infants who slept with parents and those who slept alone, the children who co-slept were happier, less anxious, had higher self-esteem, were less likely to be afraid of sleep, had fewer behavioral problems, tended to be more comfortable with intimacy, and were generally more independent as adults. (Reite, M. and J.P. Capitanio, "On the nature of social separation and social attachment", *The psychobiology of attachment and separation*, New York: Academic Press, 1985, p. 228-238)

Please re-evaluate the information presented with such conviction in "The Year in Health, A to Z. B is for Babies." Your readers have the right to know of the latest

reliable research concerning babies sleeping near their parents and of healthy parent/child attachment. Decisions about infant sleep are critically important. Please consider providing your readers with the research collected by Attachment Parenting International on our web site, shown below.

Babies and their feelings matter. Human relationships are built from how we are treated as babies. Positive societal connections are a direct result of healthy attachment within families. I hope Time Magazine will use your considerable influence to treat this issue seriously and help make a positive impact on our world.

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Infant Massage responds to Time Magazine Article

Cross-cultural studies have demonstrated that in societies where infants are held, massaged, rocked, breastfed and carried, adults are less aggressive and violent, more cooperative and compassionate. Dr. Mindell is ignoring nearly 100 years of credible research findings that negate this "smart and healthy science" that your magazine so claims. Dr. Mindell's report further ignores some of the the most respected leaders in child and family wellness our world has to offer: Drs. Margaret Meade (landmark anthropologist), John Bowlby (the father of attachment), Allan Schore (Professor - Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, and at the UCLA Center for Culture, Brain, and Development), William Sears (The Baby Book and father of Attachment Parenting), Bruce Perry (internationally-recognized authority on children in crisis) and the work of many others who, thousands of research citations later, have repeatedly confirmed that how children are cared for influences how they grow up to care for others, for themselves and, one day, their own children.

"If 20 million people were infected by a virus that caused anxiety, impulsivity, aggression, sleep problems, depression, respiratory and heart problems, vulnerability to substance abuse, antisocial and criminal behavior, retardation and school failure, we would consider it an urgent public health crisis.

Yet, in the United States alone, there are more than 20 million abused, neglected and traumatized children vulnerable to these problems. Our society has yet to recognize this epidemic, let alone develop an immunization strategy." Bruce Perry, MD, PhD

It seems that Dr. Mindell needs a good cry and a good hug from a good person, so that she may be reminded that she is not alone in this world of uncertainties. Furthermore, it seems that Time Magazine needs to re-examine their sense of responsibility in the quality of information offered to families who rely on you for reliable guidance. Here is an opportunity to empower families in their roles as caregivers and nurturers - to help them realize their child's innate potentials for compassion and empathy - to be the kind of citizens our world needs. Please reconsider the impact a message like this can have for future generations.

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Here are some resources to help, if you want to respond to that Time Magazine article found at
http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1942543_1942451_1942412,00.html entitled "The Year in Health 2009 - Babies"

All of these articles have some good quotes and research to counteract the viewpoint in the above article.
There are three great articles linked on the Attachment Parenting International web pages:

<http://attachmentparenting.org/parentingtopics/babysleepstrategies.php> and
<http://attachmentparenting.org/safeinfantsleep/>

Dr. Bill Sears - 8 Infant Sleep Facts Every Parent Should Know

Dr. James McKenna - Cosleeping and Biological Imperatives: Why Human Babies Do Not and Should Not Sleep Alone

Dr. James McKenna and Thomas McDade - Why Babies Should Never Sleep Alone.

Responses can be emailed to letters@time.com. Some emails to this address are bouncing back, and you might want to try the web form at
http://www.time.com/time/letters/email_letter.html