

Screaming to Sleep

Outer Womb – Amy Wright Glenn

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Talking Points

There is a moral imperative to end “cry it out.”

- Pain responses are activated when babies are physically separated from their caregivers. It actually leads to certain receptors in the brain (serotonin, oxytocin, and endogenous opioids—chemicals essential for our experience of happiness) from fully developing. It’s not just painful for the infant, the mother often has to consciously ignore and stop herself from tending to her child. Mother and child are linked on a cellular level and their hormones (stress and happiness) rise and fall together. When CIO (cry it out) is practiced this link breaks.
- The mother is the only habitat her baby has ever known. It’s frightening to be forcibly separated from the only thing you know.
- When babies cry and are responded to they are learning that their needs are going to be met. When babies cry and they are not responded to they are learning that their needs are not going to be met. Babies don’t learn to be OK with their needs not being met. They are suffering in silence to self-persevere.
- Many parents receive a lot of pressure to CIO. Over time CIO does “work” but not because they are learning to be OK with being left alone but for the reason stated above. Humans are the only mammal that can be convinced to leave their children alone during sleep and be convinced it’s a good idea to not meet their desperate pleas for connection at night.
- Humans naturally wake at night to nourish themselves. They wake up in the middle of the night to have a drink of water or use the bathroom. Don’t our children deserve the same rights at night? It’s hard to think that some wouldn’t comply.
- “When we know better; we do better.” The research is clear, CIO harms the most innocent and precious beings we have. It is wrong to knowingly harm babies and children.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

“The Myth of Self-Settling” by Sarah Ockwell-Smith: <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/The-Outer-Womb/the-myth-of-self-settling.html>

An interview with Marcy Axness, Ph.D. and James J. McKenna, Ph.D by Gena Kirby in response to the frightening new method to help newborns sleep through the night (“The Newborn Sleep Book”) reported on FOX news (<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2014/08/13/new-method-to-help-newbornssleep-through-night/>). The interview can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2PfSaHwSco&feature=share>

“Dangers of ‘Crying It Out’: Damaging children and their relationships for the longterm” by Darcia Narvaez Ph.D. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201112/dangers-crying-it-out>