

# There Is a Bed, a Family Bed, Where Everyone Is Sleeping

Outer Womb – Jeff Sabo  
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## Talking Points

Author Jeff Sabo is a family man. When he and his wife were expecting their first son they took the time to look into different parenting choices. Among the many decisions they had to make was where their new baby would sleep. They decided that co-sleeping/bed-sharing worked best for their family.

- Sleeping in separate beds is a relatively new phenomenon. In many cultures sleeping separately isn't accepted or possible. Why do you think sleeping separately wouldn't be accepted or possible?
- We spend all day being close to our newborn because we know they need us. Why does that change at night? Putting a tiny, helpless human in its own bed in its own room far away is a hard idea to grasp. Why not just keep them close at night too?
- There seems to be two big talking points in the co-sleeping/bed-sharing debate: safety for the child and intimacy for the couple.
  - “The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warn that infants (under 1 year) should not co-sleep with their parents.” (17) Why? In general, the reasons seem to be the risk of suffocation and SIDS. There are risks and rewards in almost every aspect of life. The risks of co-sleeping shouldn't be ignored but co-sleeping can be practiced safely.
  - Just because a child sleeps in their parent's bed doesn't mean they can't be intimate. Thinking “outside the bed” for sexual intimacy can be both beneficial and interesting for a couple's sex life. It doesn't always have to be at night and it doesn't always have to be in bed. And on another side, not all intimacy is sexual. Jeff challenges us to “Wake up at 2 a.m. to the sound of a hungry or restless baby, and place your hand gently on your baby's back while she breastfeeds, looking all the while into the eyes of your partner just feet away from you.” (17) He dares us to find a more intimate moment than that.
- Babies change our lives. It is hard to go on living exactly as we were pre-baby. Babies need to have us close to comfort them, nourish them and love them. Crying is how babies communicate that they may be “hungry, thirsty, afraid, uncertain, in pain or uncomfortable.” (18) When left to

cry all they are learning is how to deal with an unmet need and that their expression of needs will often be ignored.

- Does having a child whose needs are met outweigh the “independence” argument when it comes to co-sleeping? There are actually arguments that say keeping babies closer to their caregivers and meeting their needs promotes independence... but that’s for another day. As parents it is important for us to go with our gut, if it feels right, do it. If it doesn’t, find something different.

### Resources

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

Guidelines to sleeping safe with infants: <http://cosleeping.nd.edu/safe-co-sleeping-guidelines/>

Articles from The Natural Child Project on co-sleeping:  
<http://www.naturalchild.org/articles/sleeping.html>