



Gentle Beginnings  
Supporting Infant Sleep. One  
Connection at a Time



[www.embracingthejourney.ca](http://www.embracingthejourney.ca)

# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Chapter I: What's Normal, What's Not</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Chapter II: Acupressure for Bonding, Gas, and Sleep</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Chapter III: Gentle Sleep Foundations</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Common Challenges and How to Handle Them</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Chapter V: Common Challenges and How to Handle Them</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Chapter VI: Final Thoughts</b>	<b>09</b>

WELCOME

# Hello, I'm your Full Spectrum Doula, Kat Thompson.

## Welcome,

Sleep is one of the biggest challenges in early parenting – and it's also one of the most misunderstood.

You might be hearing ***“your baby should be sleeping through the night by now”*** or reading wildly conflicting advice about routines, sleep training, and what's “normal.”

## The truth?

Infant sleep isn't one-size-fits-all, and your baby isn't broken. They're developing exactly as they should – even if your nights are long and your days are foggy.



This guide isn't about fixing your baby or pushing rigid methods. Instead, it's about helping you understand what's going on, offering gentle, nurturing tools to support better sleep, and helping you feel more confident along the way.

You deserve sleep, and so does your baby – without sacrificing connection or your values.

- Kat Thompson



## CHAPTER I

# What's Normal, What's Not

Infant sleep is a moving target. Just when you think you've figured it out, something shifts.

That's not a sign that you're doing it wrong, it's a sign that your baby is developing. Let's walk through what's normal, what's temporary, and when it might be time to look deeper.

- **Newborns (0–3 months):** Sleep up to 16–18 hours/day – often broken into unpredictable chunks.
- **4–6 months:** May start consolidating nighttime sleep, but wake-ups for feeds are still normal.
- **6–9 months:** Teething, rolling, crawling, separation anxiety – hello sleep regressions (aka progressions).
- **9–12 months:** Some babies sleep through the night, some don't. Both are normal.

Sleep regressions are actually signs of neurological growth. They're temporary – not a setback.

**Red Flags to Watch For:**

- Snoring or heavy mouth breathing (could indicate airway issues)
- Sudden loss of weight or disinterest in feeding + sleep disruptions
- Excessively sleepy baby (possible underlying medical issue)

Most babies are noisy, unpredictable sleepers and most of it is completely normal. But if you're noticing signs of discomfort, distress, or something that doesn't feel quite right (like persistent snoring, sudden weight changes, or extreme sleepiness), trust your gut.

This is where I come in – to help you determine what's part of typical development, and what might need a closer look.

Together, we can support your baby's sleep and your peace of mind.

## CHAPTER II

# Acupressure for Bonding, Gas, and Sleep

Sometimes, the smallest touches make the biggest impact. Infant massage and acupressure aren't just calming – they support digestion, bonding, and even better sleep.

These techniques are a beautiful way to connect with your baby and offer comfort in a way that feels intuitive.

These gentle massage techniques are safe to use at any age (but always with clean hands and slow movements).

## 1. Bonding & Calm:

- Place your hands gently on baby's chest, applying soft pressure. This offers grounding and connection.
- Move in small, circular motions outward toward the shoulders while speaking or humming softly.

## 2. For Gas & Colic Relief:

- Use two fingers to trace a gentle clockwise circle around baby's belly button (clockwise matches digestion flow).

- "I Love U" massage: With baby lying on their back, trace an upside-down "I", then "L", then "U" on their left side to stimulate digestion.

## 3. For Better Sleep:

Lightly press and hold the "Yin Tang" point between baby's eyebrows with your pinky or ring finger, just a few seconds. Great for calming pre-nap or bedtime.

**Tip:** Try these after a warm bath and feed – when baby's relaxed and alert but not overtired.

Whether you're navigating gas, colic, or pre-nap chaos, acupressure and massage can become a grounding daily ritual.

If you'd like to learn more personalized techniques or want to understand how nutrition, feeding patterns, or your baby's temperament might be affecting their sleep, this is part of what I offer as a full-spectrum doula – combining infant care, acupressure, and sleep support into one nurturing, inclusive approach.

## CHAPTER III

# Gentle Sleep Foundations

There's a lot of pressure to "get your baby on a schedule," but the truth is, babies aren't clocks.

Gentle foundations work with your baby's natural rhythms – not against them – and build trust through consistency, not control.

- **Set a rhythm, not a schedule:** Look for tired cues and anchor the day around wake windows.
- **Create a sleepy-time environment:** Dim lights, white noise, swaddling (if age-appropriate), and scent (lavender or your shirt!).
- **Keep routines simple & consistent:** Bath, feed, cuddle, sing. That's enough.
- **Safe Sleep Reminder:** Always place baby on their back, on a firm surface, free of blankets, pillows, and toys.

**Real talk:** Contact naps and motion sleep are not "bad habits." They're biologically normal and safe when done with supervision.

If you're struggling to find a rhythm that works for your baby (and your family), know that you don't need a strict method or harsh sleep training plan. You need a guide who listens, adjusts, and brings tools from across the spectrum – nutrition, development, and gentle support.

***I'm here to help you build a sleep foundation that supports your baby and your values.***



## CHAPTER IV

# Regressions, Progressions & You

## Regression isn't failure.

These sleep shifts – often called regressions – are actually developmental progressions, and while they can be exhausting, they're also signs of incredible growth.

You'll have stretches of amazing rest... and then everything shifts again. That's normal.

## Progressions to look for:

- **4-month sleep change:** brain development + circadian rhythm starting
- **6–8 months:** Separation anxiety + mobility
- **12 months:** Language bursts + teething

## When regressions hit:

- Stick to your routines (don't add 10 new sleep crutches).
- Stay calm – your baby reads your nervous system.
- It's okay to ask for help. Seriously.

Even when you understand what's happening, regressions can feel like starting over. If you're burned out or unsure what to adjust, that's when support matters most.

Whether you need a short-term plan, emotional reassurance, or a partner in navigating the next step – I'm here, bringing a trauma-informed, evidence-based lens to your sleep support.



## CHAPTER V

# Common Challenges and How to Handle Them

***A gentle Q&A for exhausted minds and curious hearts.***

**“Why does my baby sleep great one day and then not at all the next?”**

Babies’ nervous systems are constantly developing. One day they may sleep soundly, the next they may be processing a growth spurt or developmental leap. This is normal, but if sleep remains disrupted for more than 10–14 days, it may be time to gently reassess routines, feeding patterns, or sleep environment – and that’s where I can help.

**“Do I need to sleep train for my baby to sleep well?”**

Not at all. Sleep training is one option – not the only one. Many families find that gentle routines, consistent cues, and responsive caregiving create sustainable sleep without tears. If you’d like help creating a rhythm that fits your baby’s temperament and your values, I offer personalized guidance that blends intuition with evidence-based sleep support.

**“Could my baby’s gas or fussiness be affecting their sleep?”**

Absolutely. Digestive discomfort is a common (and fixable!) cause of disrupted sleep.

Things like latch, milk transfer, feeding position, and even your own nutrition (if breastfeeding) can influence your baby’s comfort. I incorporate acupressure and nutritional education into sleep support to help you address the root cause.

**“Can sleep issues cause postpartum stress or anxiety?”**

Yes – and it’s more common than people talk about. When you’re not sleeping, everything feels harder. If you’re overwhelmed, feeling irritable, hopeless, or anxious about every nap, it’s okay to reach out. You deserve care, too. I can help you find clarity and support options – from gentle sleep adjustments to referrals for mental health support, if needed.

**“What’s the difference between hiring you and a sleep consultant?”**

Many sleep consultants focus just on wake windows and naps. I look at the whole picture: your baby’s nervous system, your feeding journey, your parenting style, and even things like birth trauma or emotional load. I also draw from tools like infant acupressure, postpartum care, and gentle communication methods.

You’re not just getting a sleep plan – you’re getting whole-family support.



## CHAPTER VI

# Final Thoughts

**Sleep isn't just about schedules – it's about connection, comfort, and confidence.**

Whether your baby is in the middle of a regression, you're navigating cluster feeds, or you're just feeling unsure, please know: you're not doing anything wrong.

**This phase is hard, and it's okay to say that out loud.**

You don't need to follow every trend, buy every sleep gadget, or feel pressured to "train" your baby in ways that don't feel right.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to infant sleep – only what feels right for your family, your values, and your baby.



As a full-spectrum doula with additional training in infant care, postpartum wellness, and gentle sleep support, I'm here to help you tune in – not tough it out.

Whether you're looking for a one-time consult, ongoing guidance, or just a place to start, I'm ready to support you with empathy, practical tools, and zero pressure.

**You're not alone in the dark.**

*- Kat Thompson*