

# Effects of co-sleeping



**Con: Co-Sleeping; Angelica Sewake**

The research paper will examine the effects of co-sleeping. The definition of co-sleeping is, “ The standard custom in collectivist cultures, of having a child and parent share a bed” (Belsky, 2010, 87). A collectivist culture pertains to, “ Societies that prize social harmony, obedience, and close family connectedness over independent achievement” (87).

In the United States the issue of practicing co-sleeping has become controversial (Field, 2007, 49). “ Opponents suggest potential increased risks of suffocation and sudden infant death syndrome” which is often caused by co-sleeping (49). On the controversial topic of co-sleeping there are many negative factors to consider. These factors include, the physical safety of the infant and the future psychological affect the child will endure or respond in the long term.

“ In May 1999, the Consumer Product Safety Commission released a warning against co-sleeping or putting babies to sleep on adult beds that were based on a study of death reports under the age of two who had died from 1980 to 1997” (Breazeale, 2001, 2). After the CPSC acknowledged these statistics and shared their findings with the public, it caused parents to be disturbed, rather than serve as a warning (3). The media also became involved in the spread of this alarming statistic and refrained from telling the public 2, 700 infants that died from this study died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (2).

Co-sleeping with an infant is hazardous to an infants life while both care giver and child are asleep. Co-sleeping can cause Sudden Infant Death

Syndrome (SIDS) which, “...Refers to unexplained death of an apparently healthy infant, often while sleeping” (Belsky, 2010, 88). Researchers shared statistics of the ratio of infant fatality in the United States; which is 1 to every 1, 000 babies (88). The ratio given is large, however, “ Sudden Death Infant Syndrome is a top-ranking cause of infant mortality in the United States” (88). This statistic also shows the ratio of collectivist families who participate in this practice of co-sleeping with their infants. Studies also have shown the risk of co-sleeping with an infant increases the chances of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome when an infant is at the age of 12 to 18 months old (Alms, 2007, 1385). Also to consider involving the infant’s safety when co-sleeping is to take pre cautions and awareness of the higher possibility of the child being suffocated or injured physically accidentally by his or her caregiver (1385).

Another effect of co-sleeping is having an infant nurtured into becoming a reactive co-sleeper (Field, 2007, 50). “ In contrast, over the long term, co-sleeping infants may have more trouble sleeping” (50). Studies cited by Field prove that “ Reactive co-sleepers had more frequent night-wakings” (50). These findings lead to nurturing the infant into a child having a change in the development of personality and character traits (50). The first trait of change in an infant will have a need for an object as security (Hayes Etal, 1996, 355). “ The security object may function as a night time human tactile contact...” (355). According to Field co-sleeping is a collectivist, putting emphasis on family closeness and dependance; but co-sleeping causes the opposite as an infant grows into child hood, puberty, and eventually into adulthood (50).” However, early co-sleeping children were more self-reliant

and exhibited more social independence” (50). Therefore, if a collectivist cultural family reinforces co-sleeping, they also reinforce the independence of a child.

In conclusion researches and studies prove there are many pre cautions and dangers to consider when a caregiver and parent decided to practice the method of co-sleeping with their infant. As a recap to the many negative possibilities to remember and consider is: co-sleeping is the underlying cause of Sudden Death Infant Syndrome, co-sleeping may lead to suffocation or an increase risk of caregiver physically injuring the infant, and the psychological effects that may cause the character or personality of the infant as he or she develops to be unacceptable.

### **Works Cited**

- Alms, Bernt. “ To co-sleep or not to sleep?.” *Acta Paediatrica* 96. 10 (2007): 1385-1386.
- Belsky, Janet. *Experiencing the Life Span*. Second Ed. Worth Publishers, 2010. 87-88.
- Breazeale, Tami. *Attachment Parenting: A Practical Approach for the Reduction of Attachment Disorders & Promotion of Emotionally Secure Children*. Bethel College, 2001. 2-3.
- Field, Tiffany. *The Amazing Infant*. Blackwell Publishing Co., 49-50.
- Hayes, Marie J., Shawn M. Roberts, and Rebecca Stowe. “ Early Childhood Co-Sleeping: Parent-Child and Parent-Infant Nighttime Interactions.” *Infant Mental Health Journal* 17. 4 (1996): 348-357