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BASED ON 52,642 PARENTS ACROSS 107 COUNTRIES

The State of Parent & *Baby* *Sleep* 2026

The largest survey of its kind, drawn from parents actively seeking sleep help. A lens on the families awake at 3 a.m. — and what the data really says about how they, and their babies, are sleeping.

52,642

PARENTS SURVEYED

107

COUNTRIES

9_{mo}

DATA WINDOW

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AUTHORSHIP

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FROM THE AUTHOR

What 52,642 parents told us about *sleep*.

Every number in this report comes from a parent who answered the question because they needed help. That matters. This isn't a random cross-section of families — it's a portrait of the ones who are awake at 3 a.m. and still willing to fill out a survey.

We built the Betteroo Sleep Assessment to meet families where they are — not to collect data, but to give back guidance. Between July 2025 and April 2026, more than fifty thousand parents from 107 countries completed it. This report is what they told us.

Some of what we found confirmed what parents have always said out loud: they are exhausted. Four in five sleep under six hours. Fewer than one percent feel energized. The quiet cost is showing up not in their work, but in their relationships — seventy percent say sleep loss is making them feel distant from their partner.

But much of what we found contradicts the scripts parents are handed. The worst month for night waking isn't four — it's seven to nine. Reflux babies don't wake more than other babies. Babies of parents who work full-time wake less, not more. Co-sleeping isn't a philosophy; for most of these parents it's a last resort.

The goal of this report is simple: to give parents, clinicians, and journalists a better map. To name what's actually happening in the first two years. And, hopefully, to make the 3 a.m. feel a little less lonely.

A note on the sample. These are parents who came to Betteroo because they needed help with sleep. Figures reflect that population — not all parents everywhere. That caveat is also the point: this is the largest and most detailed dataset ever assembled on the families who are struggling.

Rachel Rothman

Co-Founder & Chief Parenting Officer, Betteroo · Former Chief Technologist, Good Housekeeping Institute

THE TOP-LINE

Five numbers that define the *year in sleep*.

If you read nothing else, read these. Each figure is drawn from the full 52,642-parent sample.

79%

of parents sleep under six hours a night. Four in five are running on less than the minimum adults need to function.

82%

describe themselves as exhausted or drained. Fewer than one percent (0.7%) say energized. The gap is the story.

68.1%

of 7-9 month-olds wake three or more times a night — higher than the oft-cited 4-month mark. The regression narrative is wrong.

9.5%

of babies fall asleep on their own. Independent sleep is the exception, not the norm. Nine in ten need help to fall asleep.

70%

of parents say sleep deprivation is making them feel distant from their partner. The most common daily consequence — above struggling with tasks, skipping meals, or cancelling plans.

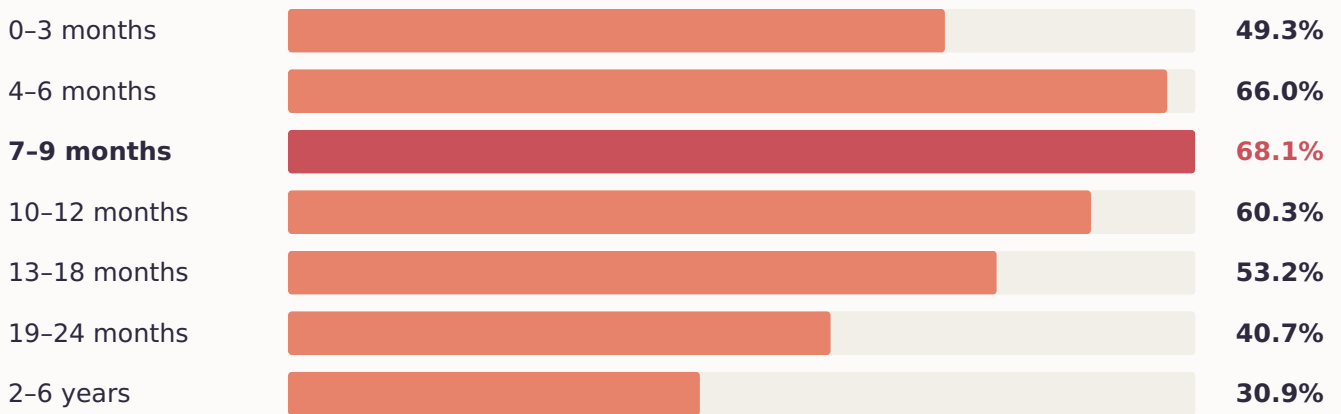
The quietest finding: parents aren't losing the fight at work. They're losing it at home. Partnership, not productivity, is the first casualty of sleep debt.

THE 7-9 MONTH PEAK

The real sleep crisis happens *later* than you think.

Parenting content has spent a decade warning families about the four-month regression. The data tells a different story: night waking peaks between seven and nine months, then slowly resolves.

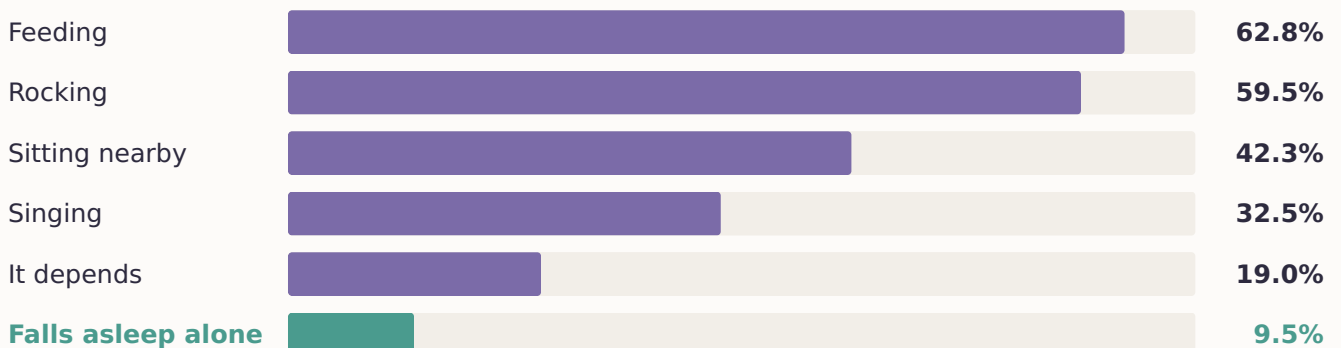
% OF BABIES WAKING 3+ TIMES PER NIGHT, BY AGE



The reframe. Parents are told sleep will "get better after four months." For most, it gets worse — peaking between 7 and 9 months as babies hit developmental milestones, separation anxiety, and a second wave of night feeds. The decline after 9 months is real and steady.

How babies actually fall asleep

Only one in ten babies falls asleep independently. The rest rely on a caregiver — most commonly through feeding or rocking.



THE EMOTIONAL LOAD

The cost isn't tiredness. It's *everything else*.

Sleep deprivation shows up as depletion, guilt, and withdrawal. Parents aren't describing a bad night — they're describing a baseline.

HOW OFTEN PARENTS SAY THEY FEEL...

72%

Low energy — often

64%

Depleted — often

53%

Guilty — often

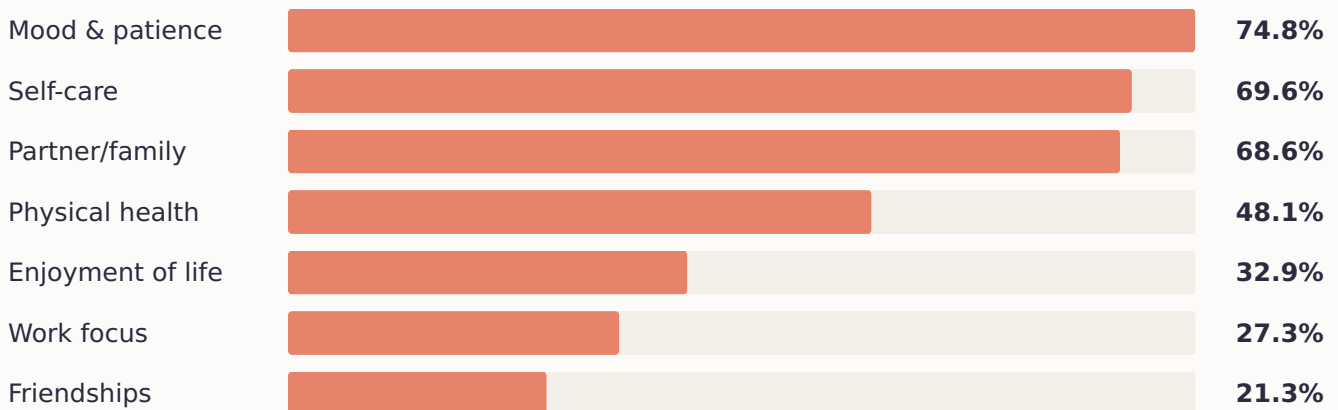
68%

Often on 3+ of six wellbeing burdens

The compound burden. 68% of parents report "often" feeling three or more of: low energy, depletion, overwhelm, phone-as-escape, stress, and guilt. These are not isolated bad days. They are a sustained state.

What sleep loss affects most

Parents were asked which areas of their life had suffered most. The answer isn't work — it's the relationships closest to them.



The headline beneath the headline. 70.5% of parents say sleep loss is making them feel distant from their partner — higher than the share who say they're struggling with daily tasks (66.3%). Partnership is the first casualty.

COUNTERINTUITIVE

Five findings that rewrite the *playbook*.

These are the numbers most likely to generate feature coverage — because they challenge what parents have been told for years.

FINDING 01

It's the 7-9 month peak — not the 4-month regression.

The "4-month sleep regression" dominates parenting content. The data shows the real peak is later: 68.1% of babies wake 3+ times per night at 7-9 months, compared to 66.0% at 4-6 months. Parents are routinely told sleep will improve after 4-6 months. For most, it gets worse before it gets better.

Why it matters: the 7-9 month window collides with separation anxiety, teething, motor-skill milestones, and a second wave of night feeds. Preparing for it changes what parents expect — and what they blame themselves for.

FINDING 02

Reflux babies don't wake more than other babies.

Reflux is the third most-mentioned theme in parents' free-text responses, after co-sleeping and contact napping. Parents routinely attribute night waking to reflux. But babies with reflux wake 3+ times at 57% vs 58% for babies without — a statistically indistinguishable difference.

The takeaway: frequent waking in the first year is nearly universal — reflux or not. Treating reflux may relieve a baby's discomfort, but it likely won't transform their sleep.

FINDING 03

Babies of parents who work full-time wake *less*.

49% of working full-time parents' babies wake 3+ times per night, versus 63% for home full-time parents. This is almost certainly not because work "fixes" sleep — it reflects an age-composition effect (babies of working parents skew older, past the peak-waking window) and the structuring effect of daycare routines.

Reading it carefully: the comparison that makes this headline easy to misinterpret. It's a lens on routine and age — not a judgment on parenting choices.

FINDING 04

Co-sleeping is survival — not strategy.

40% of parents who wrote free-text responses mentioned co-sleeping, making it the single most common write-in theme. The pattern is overwhelmingly reactive: parents fall into bed-sharing after months of failed attempts to get their baby to sleep independently.

70% of co-sleepers are exhausted or drained **and** sleeping under six hours. Co-sleeping isn't rest for this population. It's the last thing they try.

The narrative shift: coverage tends to frame bed-sharing as a philosophical choice. In the free-text data, it's almost never that. It's "I never planned this."

FINDING 05

Single parents carry a measurably heavier load.

73% of single parents feel depleted "often," versus 64% of partnered parents — a nine-point gap. The comparison is drawn from 4,059 single parents and 47,122 partnered parents, making the difference both substantial and statistically solid.

A gap worth naming. Single parents don't just shoulder more tasks. They report a higher rate of sustained depletion — the kind that shows up over weeks, not hours.

A note for reporters. Each finding is derived from the full 52,642-parent sample unless otherwise noted. Subgroup sample sizes available on request. Every finding has been medically reviewed by Dr. Meidad Greenberg, M.D.

VERBATIM

The words behind the *numbers*.

18,587 parents wrote free-text responses. These are unedited, drawn directly from the survey. Names are shared only where parents opted in.

CO-SLEEPING OUT OF DESPERATION

"We end up co-sleeping after the first 2-3 night wakings. I never planned this."

"Co-sleeping but wish we weren't. Waking 7-12 times a night. Comfort feeding."

"We co-sleep out of desperation. I never get a sleep."

CONTACT NAPS & PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY

"She loves contact naps and falling asleep on me. I can't put her down without her waking instantly."

"Naps the best when contact napping. Won't go down in her crib."

MAKING IT THROUGH

What *change* sounds like.

Betteroo parents who shifted their pattern, in their own words. These are self-reported outcomes from our community, not clinical trials.

"I was co-sleeping, feeding to sleep, and waking 5–10 times a night. Within weeks, my baby slept 5.5 hours without a feed."

ALEX

"Naps went from averaging 59 minutes to over 90. Night wake-ups dropped from 5 out of 8 nights to just 1."

LAUREN

"Three weeks in, night wake-ups dropped from 7+ to 2–3 — and one night, zero. Naps nearly doubled."

AATEQAH

"We slept through the night 3 days in a row. My daughter went from needing me for every bedtime to letting Dad do it."

MEGAN

The arc. The parents who write to us don't describe overnight transformations. They describe a pattern breaking — one fewer wake-up, one longer stretch, one handoff that finally works. It's rarely dramatic. It's always consequential.

THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Where parents are *awake* tonight.

Responses span 107 countries; 47 countries, 217 regions, and 196 cities cleared the $n \geq 30$ threshold required for breakdowns. The full interactive map is online.

TOP COUNTRIES BY SAMPLE

United States	20,884
United Kingdom	11,221
Australia	7,951
Canada	3,286
New Zealand	758
Germany	695
Italy	573
Netherlands	525
Spain	466
Singapore	455

TOP CITIES BY SAMPLE

Sydney	2,854
London	1,906
Melbourne	1,667
Brisbane	1,186
New York	909
Perth	857
Chicago	780
Dallas	653
Adelaide	579
Toronto	554

Regional extremes

Pockets worth surfacing for local coverage — places where the story is sharper than the global average.

Tennessee, USA

87% of parents sleep under six hours — among the highest rates in the US sample.

Glasgow, UK

90% exhausted. 64% of babies wake three or more times a night.

Amsterdam, Netherlands

The lowest reported guilt in the dataset: 8%. A striking outlier against most Anglophone markets.

Albania

98% exhausted — the highest reported rate in any country with $n \geq 30$.

ANGLES BY OUTLET

Lead stats and story *hooks*.

A shortlist of entry points, organized by audience. Each pairs a lead stat with a supporting voice or frame.

OUTLET TYPE	LEAD STAT	ANGLE
Parenting Parents, The Bump, Romper	7-9 month peak , not the 4-month regression	Reframes what parents should prepare for. Pairs with Alex's transformation quote.
Health & wellness Well+Good, SELF	72% low energy / 68% overwhelmed on 3+ burdens	Sleep deprivation as a maternal mental-health crisis. Pairs with "co-sleep out of desperation."
Relationship & lifestyle Cup of Jo, The Cut	70% feel distant from their partner	Sleep loss quietly erodes partnership. Pairs with Megan's "letting Dad do it" moment.
Business & tech Fast Company, TechCrunch	52,642 parents across 107 countries	Methodology, scale, and an AI-quiz data approach — a new lens on a familiar struggle.
Local / regional TV	City- or state-specific exhaustion rate	"Parents in [city] are sleeping worse than the national average." Pairs with a local parent.
Medical & pediatric MedPage, Contemporary Pediatrics	Reflux babies wake at the same rate as non-reflux	Challenges a common clinical assumption about night-waking etiology.

Exclusives welcome. We're happy to pull bespoke cuts for local or niche coverage — by city, region, age band, or household composition — where sample sizes allow. See the final page for contact.

METHODOLOGY & AUTHORSHIP

Who made this, and *how*.

The State of Parent & Baby Sleep 2026 is drawn from 52,642 completed Betteroo Sleep Assessment responses collected between July 31, 2025 and April 14, 2026.

The method, briefly

Respondents are parents of children aged 0–6 who came to Betteroo seeking help with their child's sleep. All data is self-reported, anonymized, and aggregated. Geographic breakdowns use a minimum threshold of 30 responses. Because this is a self-selecting sample of parents actively seeking sleep help, figures should be interpreted as reflecting the experience of that population — not a random cross-section of all parents.

Subgroup comparisons (single vs partnered parents; working vs home; reflux vs non-reflux; by age band) are reported where n is large enough to warrant it. Full subgroup sample sizes are available on request.

AUTHORED BY**Rachel Rothman**

Co-Founder & Chief Parenting Officer at Betteroo. Formerly Chief Technologist at the Good Housekeeping Institute, where she led product testing and editorial strategy for over a decade. Available for interviews on the data, the findings, and parent sleep broadly.

MEDICALLY REVIEWED BY**Dr. Meidad Greenberg,
M.D.**

Board-certified pediatrician and medical reviewer of this report. Available for clinical context on infant and toddler sleep development, reflux, and nighttime physiology.

Citations welcome. Please attribute to "*Betteroo State of Parent & Baby Sleep 2026*" with a link to betteroo.ai/state-of-baby-sleep.

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PRESS & INTERVIEWS

For the parents awake *tonight.*

Betteroo is a personalized sleep guidance app for parents of children 0–24 months. We built this report because the parents using our product told us something the existing literature didn't capture — and the numbers proved them right.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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<https://betteroo.ai/state-of-baby-sleep/>

MEDIA INQUIRIES, EXCLUSIVES, AND DATA REQUESTS

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