



## **HSCP Code of conduct (DRAFT – for consultation)**

### **Definition**

The code of conduct sets out the vision and working principles of holistic sleep coaches. All HSCP graduates who uphold and protect the values set within this code are listed on the HSCP register.

A holistic approach is one that takes account of a child and family's physical, emotional, cultural, psychological, relational, developmental, nutritional and health needs in their practice.

### **Summary**

This is a summary of the HSCP code of conduct. You will find the full expanded code on page 3. Feel free to read on to find out more about the core tenets of the code. Please ask your sleep coach for a copy of their terms and conditions, and clarify any points with them before engaging their services.

1. The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
2. Attachment and bonding is prioritized
3. Available evidence is assessed critically, and informs our practice
4. Responsive parenting is encouraged
5. We support responsive feeding including age-appropriate acceptance of night feeds
6. We promote family centred care, caring for the whole family, and recognizing parents as the experts on their children.
7. Non-judgmental practice is standard. We will not discriminate against anyone based on their age, gender identity, race, colour, religion, sexuality or disability.
8. We acknowledge the variation within families, and make no promises regarding time frames for sleep changes
9. Our follow up support is clearly defined so that all parents know what to expect from us.
10. We do not recommend the use of strategies that include leaving a child to cry alone

### **Ethos**

At the holistic sleep coaching program we are passionate about biologically normal infant sleep, responsive feeding, respectful parenting and evidence based, age and developmentally appropriate support for families. We prioritise attachment, connection and responsiveness, as well as age-appropriate and realistic expectations about sleep.

## Scope of practice

- Holistic sleep coaches do not seek to give medical advice, or make a diagnosis of any type of pathology.
- An HSCP trained sleep coach will work with a family, providing education, support and information.
- They do not give prescriptive advice or recommendations that are not wholly in line with the values and principles of the parents they work with.
- HSCP trained practitioners may refer to themselves as educators, specialists, consultants or coaches.
- An HSCP practitioner recognizes their scope of practice and may refer to other more suitably qualified professionals in order to support families to get the most appropriate care.

## What makes us different?

We believe in prioritizing a sensitive approach to parenting that puts a child's needs first. We also believe that sometimes waiting it out is not right for some families. We do not draw firm lines around when it is or is not appropriate to make changes to sleep, as we fully believe that every family and every context is different. However, we appreciate that some parents need some reassurance around what they can expect from their sleep coach.

Here are some general principles:

- We are guided by the best interests of children
- We are aware of the evidence for normal infant night feeding, waking and sleep patterns, and will not seek to push children into a pattern that is not age-appropriate
- We are compassionate to families
- We seek to find creative solutions to coping with sleep
- We provide education and reassurance about normal infant sleep, and suggest pragmatic options to make this easier
- We recognize that not everyone has the privilege of partner, family and community support
- We know that parents can be supported by ensuring they have good mental health support, self-care strategies, and understand how to improve their own sleep
- We always look for underlying causes that might explain a particularly challenging sleep pattern
- We acknowledge that parents may be struggling, but our strategies will never include a non-response, even if this means a slower process
- We offer options, tools and ideas appropriate to the age, developmental stage, family set up, parenting choices and urgency of the situation
- We recognise and understand that all families are different, and some are in desperate situations. We do our best to support those families with compassion, holding the dual priorities of children's emotional wellbeing and parental difficulty.
- We acknowledge that there are no easy one-size-fits-all answers

## The HSCP Code

1. **Safety:** The welfare and safety of the child is paramount. The sleep coach will not recommend strategies that contradict official SIDS guidelines. Families are given information and support about bed-sharing so that they can make an informed decision about what is right for their family. Sleep coaches will also follow local safeguarding guidelines where applicable and where a child is at risk of abuse, neglect or maltreatment. The client's confidentiality is maintained, except when it needs to be breached for child protection purposes.
2. **Attachment:** HSCP coaches will prioritise and value attachment and bonding, and will not make recommendations that a parent is uncomfortable with, or that may compromise attachment.
3. **Evidence base:** Coaches stay up to date with evidence base, and to the best of their ability, share information, resources and tools that are evidence based. They will never use scare-tactics to pressurize parents into utilizing any strategy that the parent is uncomfortable with. Coaches also recognize that all children are individuals and sometimes fall outside of normal ranges.
4. **Responsive parenting:** All HSCP coaches are committed to responsive parenting, and will never suggest a non-responsive approach, including, leaving a child to cry alone, avoiding eye contact, and delaying or avoiding contact and comfort.
5. **Responsive feeding:** Coaches promote and advocate for breastfeeding where applicable, and will not require a parent to stop breastfeeding before they are ready to do so. When breastfeeding is not possible or applicable, coaches will support responsive bottle feeding. All HSCP coaches are aware of current evidence base around the appropriateness of night feeding and the biologically normal age range for night feeding in both breast and bottle fed infants.
6. **Family-centred care:** All HSCP coaches take a family's circumstances and context into consideration, and co-create bespoke plans for families based on their needs and wishes. Families are considered the experts on their children.
7. **Non-judgmental:** All HSCP coaches practice in a non-judgmental way, taking a family's race, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity into account.
8. **Non-prescriptive:** An HSCP coach does not guarantee a particular outcome in a particular time frame (such as sleeping through the night in a certain amount of time). They will endeavor to provide timeframes that are realistic and age appropriate. Coaches work in partnership with families, providing information, tools, support and options.
9. **Transparent:** All coaches will be clear about what follow and support they offer to families. They will provide terms and conditions to enable families to be aware of exactly what they are paying for prior to booking a consultation.
10. **Crying:** All HSCP coaches prefer gentle strategies, and will never recommend leaving a child alone to cry for any length of time. They also use strategies that are responsive, and seek to avoid or minimize crying. However, they cannot guarantee that children will never cry.