

The noisy secret to keeping baby asleep

Many a new parent has wished for a magical cure to get their baby to sleep at night. Now, an ingenious father may have found the answer.

Canadian musician Barry Authors has created a mobile phone app which may hold the key to a peaceful night's sleep for restless babies and their exhausted parents. The Babydoze app plays clips of "familiar" and reassuring sounds from the womb and has yielded remarkable results.

In one major hospital trial, the recording was shown to calm crying babies on 122 out of 124 occasions, usually in less than five minutes. This was significantly more effective than a music box or cuddling the child.

Authors came up with the idea while his wife was pregnant in the U.K. After reading articles about how a mother's internal noises have a calming effect on their unborn babies, he persuaded staff at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London, to record the unique noises made by his wife's womb.

The recording was made using a Doppler –an ultrasound recording device- and a specially adapted microphone. The sounds that can be heard are made by the mother's blood flowing through the placenta.

The recording - which can be bought on CD or as a £3.80 app - is most effective if parents begin playing it to their baby soon after the birth. It should be played at top volume as the womb is a surprisingly noisy place.

The app has already found favour in Canada, the US and Australia and Authors hopes British babies will soon be sleeping peacefully to the gentle thrumming of the womb, while their parents drift off to the sound of.....silence.

Gwyneth Rees