



Help Your Child Sleep Better

Sleep is a vital need, essential to a child's health and growth. Sleep promotes alertness, memory, and performance. Children who get enough sleep are more likely to function better and are less prone to behavioral problems and moodiness. That is why it is important for parents to start early and help their children develop good sleep habits.

Children thrive on routine

The #1 tip for good sleeping habits in children is to follow a nightly routine. A bedtime ritual makes it easier for your child to relax, fall asleep, and stay asleep through the night.

Typical Bedtime Routine:

1. Have a light snack.
2. Take a bath.
3. Put on pajamas.
4. Brush teeth.
5. Read a story.
6. Make sure the room is quiet and a comfortable temperature.
7. Put your child to bed.
8. Say goodnight and leave.

How Much Sleep Should My Child Get?	
Age	Hours Of Sleep
1 - 3 years	12 - 14
3 - 5 years	11 - 13
5 - 12 years	10 - 11

Helpful tips

- Make bedtime the same time every night.
- Make bedtime a positive and relaxing experience without TV, tablets, videos, or phones. According to one recent study, screen time prior to bed can lead to difficulty falling and staying asleep.
- Save your child's favorite relaxing, non-stimulating activities until last and have them occur in the child's bedroom. Reading to your child every night can build happy memories and encourage a life-long love of books.
- Keep the bedtime environment (e.g. light, temperature, noise level) the same all night long.

Falling (and staying!) asleep

Use a bedtime routine to form positive associations with sleeping. A child who falls asleep on his/her own is better able to return to sleep during normal nighttime awakenings and sleep through the night. Unless your child is sick, has been injured, or clearly requires your assistance, you do not need to go into their room every time they wake up. Be consistent in your words and actions that your child is expected to fall asleep on their own.

Which sleep problems/disorders should I watch for in children?

Nightmares often occur at times of transition, stress, or change in a child's routine. Encourage your child to talk about the nightmare. Discuss comforting images before bedtime and avoid television immediately before bedtime.

Studies show that 37% of children, kindergarten through fourth grade, suffer from at least one sleep-related problem. If your child experiences any of these sleep problems or is very sleepy during the day, be sure to consult with your child's physician.

Sleep Terrors/Sleep Walking occur most frequently from 4-8 years of age during the early part of the night. Waking or comforting the child is usually not helpful as it prolongs the event. Be sure your child's room and your house is safe. Most important, encourage him/her to get enough sleep.

Sleep Apnea is a serious disorder in which there are pauses in breathing during sleep. Children with sleep apnea may snore loudly, experience restless sleep and be sleepy during the day. Enlarged tonsils or adenoids, allergies, weight problems, and other medical problems may contribute to sleep apnea. There are many ways to treat apnea, so it is important to see your doctor or visit a sleep center for a diagnosis and treatment.