

## Monthly message

# sleep is important!

## sleep is an essential part of your child's health and growth.

We often focus on what activities you can do with your children during the day to improve development, but what happens during the night plays a big role in your child's ability to focus and learn as well. Sleep is an essential part of your child's health and growth. Children who get enough sleep are more likely to function better and less likely to experience behavioral problems. Helping your child develop a bedtime routine can lead to a better night's sleep and a happier, more productive day.

Despite all of the benefits of sleep, getting a child into bed and to sleep for the night can be a challenge. Setting up a regular schedule can greatly impact a child's ability to get sound sleep. A 2009 article in the journal *Sleep* found that a consistent nighttime routine improved sleep in children who had mild to moderate sleep problems. The structure of bedtime routines also associates the bedroom with good feelings and provides a sense of security and control. Good sleep habits can help take the stress out of bedtime.

There is no right way or wrong way for you and you children when it comes to setting up a bedtime routine. In general, your routine should include all the things that your child needs to do before going to sleep, including brushing teeth, washing up, putting on PJ's, and quality family time. Your child may want to be read to, talk about the day, or be told a story. Whatever you choose to do, keep the routine short (30 minutes or less, not including a bath) and be firm about ending it when it's time to sleep.



While each child is different, the following chart shows the recommended hours of sleep (including naps) for children.

| Age           | Hours Of Sleep |
|---------------|----------------|
| 0 - 2 months  | 10.5 - 18      |
| 2 - 12 months | 14 - 15        |
| 1 - 3 years   | 12 - 14        |
| 3 - 5 years   | 11 - 13        |
| 5 - 12 years  | 10 - 11        |

### Important Reminder!

*Babies should be put to sleep on their backs. According to the "Back to Sleep" program, this lowers the risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The American Academy of Pediatrics does **not** recommend placing young children to sleep on a water bed, sofa, pillow, soft mattress or other soft surfaces.*

## Tips for all ages to develop a better bedtime

### Sleep and Newborns (1-2 months)

- Observe baby's sleep patterns and identify signs of sleepiness.
- Put baby in the crib when drowsy, not asleep.
- Place baby to sleep on his/her back with face and head clear of blankets and other soft items.
- Encourage nighttime sleep.

### Sleep and Infants (3-11 months)

- Develop regular daytime and bedtime schedules.
- Create a consistent and enjoyable bedtime routine.
- Establish a regular "sleep friendly" environment.
- Encourage baby to fall asleep independently.

### Sleep and Toddlers (1-3 years)

- Maintain a daily sleep schedule and consistent bedtime routine.
- Make the bedroom environment the same every night and throughout the night.
- Set limits that are consistent, communicated and enforced. Encourage use of a security object such as a blanket or stuffed animal.

### Sleep and Preschoolers (3-5 years)

- Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine that ends in the room where the child sleeps.
- Child should sleep in the same sleeping environment every night, in a room that is cool, quiet and dark – and without a TV.

### Sleep and School-aged Children (5-12 years)

- Teach school-aged children about healthy sleep habits.
- Continue to emphasize need for regular and consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine.
- Make your child's bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet.
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom.
- Avoid caffeine.

The sooner you establish a bedtime routine, the better. You can start a routine as young as 6 or 8 weeks old. A bedtime routine is good for parents, too. You can look forward to that time every day where you can talk, read, cuddle and smile with each other.

**Looking for a bedtime story? Check out [babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com) for a book or lullaby list.**



Bedtime story!





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# Bedtime Routine Chart

|           | Bath time | Put on<br>PJ's | Brush<br>your<br>teeth | Go to the<br>potty | Read, talk<br>or sing<br>with family | Lights out<br>and time<br>to sleep! |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| MONDAY    |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| TUESDAY   |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| WEDNESDAY |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| THURSDAY  |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| FRIDAY    |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| SATURDAY  |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |
| SUNDAY    |           |                |                        |                    |                                      |                                     |