

Activities for Home to Help your Child Sleep

Sleep Hygiene



What is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is the habits that are necessary to have a good nighttime sleep routine. For your child, establishing a healthy sleep routine is crucial for their physical health, emotional and cognitive development



Sleep in Your Child's Development

Sleep is crucial for your child's well-being and daily functioning

- **Physical Health:** Supports growth and development, strengthens the immune system, and helps with recovery from daily activities
- **Emotional Regulation:** Helps to manage emotions better, reduces irritability and mood swings
- **Cognitive Functioning:** Enhances memory, attention, problem-solving skills, and learning capacity
- **Behavior:** Well-rested children tend to show more patience and cooperation



Safe Sleeping ABCs for Under 1 Year Old

- **A**lone- Have your child sleep alone and if it is a newborn keep objects, toys, and loose bedding out of the crib
- **B**ack- Have your child sleep on their back for naps and at night
- **C**rib- Have your child sleep in a crib with a firm mattress and fitted sheets

What is "Normal?"

- Newborn babies require 14-17 hours of sleep per day
- Toddlers average 11-14 hours of sleep per day and preschool age drops to 10-13 hours
- Children should get 9-12 hours of sleep and teens should get at least 8-10 hours
- Sleeping through the night can begin at 3 months of age (with doctor's approval)
 - Sleeping through the night is considered 6 hours
- Your child's circadian rhythm starts at a few months old: This is referred to as our "body clock", and guides us when we feel awake and when we feel sleepy
 - Naps should be taken in a naturally lit room to help your child's circadian rhythm
 - 0-6 months have 4-5 naps, 6-12 months have 2-3 naps, ~1 year to 4 years have 1 nap
- Your child may need support sleeping for some time especially during developmental leaps, stressful times, and illness

Activities to Support Sleep

- Create a consistent sleep schedule
 - Use a visual schedule or chart to set a regular bedtime and wake-up times; make it fun by having your child decorate this chart
- Establish a calming bedtime routine
 - Listen to soothing music, reading your child's favorite book, or taking a warm bath
- Plan daily physical activities, such as bike rides or family walks
 - Avoid exercise close to bedtime
- Remove screens, tablets, or phones from your child's bedroom and limit screen time a few hours before bed



Tips and Tricks

- All children develop at their own pace; avoid comparing your child to others
- Children may need snacks close to bedtime to reduce hunger at night
- Create a cozy and inviting sleep space
 - Allow your child to pick out their favorite blankets or stuff animals if older than 1 year of age
- Try out deep breathing or gentle yoga stretches to help reduce anxiety
 - Use a stuffed toy on the belly so the child is able to see the toy move with the deep breathing
- Your child might benefit from laying with a weighted blanket (up to 10% of their body weight)
- Avoid using melatonin unless under the supervision of your child's doctor



Considerations

- These activities are not a substitute for medical care, please seek the advice of your child's medical team before implementing any of the strategies discussed here



Therapist Notes
