

Good Sleep Habits



A good night's sleep

Getting a good night's sleep plays a big role in children's mental health, physical health, and overall well-being. In fact, sleep is just as important to children's development as nutrition and physical activity!

Unfortunately, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can disturb sleep. Paying special attention to your child's sleep can help in many ways. Research shows that children who get the right amount of sleep are sick less frequently, focus and behave better in school, and manage stress more easily.

Here are some ideas to help your children get enough sleep:

- **Keep regular routines.**

Children thrive with predictable routines and love quality time with their parents or caregivers. If you do the same activities with your child at naptime and bedtime, it can help everyone relax and help your child settle more easily into sleep. Try reading a book, singing a quiet song, or just talking quietly with your child. Ask her about the best part of her day, and then share yours!

- **Keep bedtimes and wake-up times consistent.**

Our bodies are healthier and our brains work better when our sleep schedules are regular and predictable. It also helps the bedtime routine go more smoothly when kids know what to expect. Try to have your child go to bed around the same time each night. A consistent bedtime can also make waking up the next morning much easier!



- **Stay active during the day.**

Make physical activity, like a walk to the park, a visit to the playground, or playing a favorite sport together, a family routine. Children who get enough exercise also have an easier time going to bed at night.

- **Limit screen usage, especially in the evenings.**

Avoid screens (television, phones, and tablets) in the sleep space. Research shows that the light from the screens keeps children and adults from feeling sleepy and relaxed in the evening. Screen use before bed can make it more difficult for children to fall asleep and stay asleep.

- **Pay attention to the bedtime environment.**

Create a space that helps children fall asleep. Keep lights dim and noise levels low. The temperature should be cool (high 60s to low 70s) rather than cold or hot. Beds should be comfortable places for sleep, not play.

- **Seek support from a health care provider.**

Talk to your pediatrician if your child experiences frequent awakenings, frequent nightmares or night terrors, or sleepwalking.



SOURCES

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