CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA
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SLEEP

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN GET THE REST THEY NEED



Getting enough sleep is an important part of a healthy, happy lifestyle. Yet parents often face many challenges with their children and sleep. Fortunately, there are ways to change unhealthy patterns and help your child get the quality sleep they need.



For proper brain and body development, children need sleep. However, from worrying about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) with a newborn, to getting a toddler to sleep, to helping a preschooler cope with nightmares, most parents face challenges with their children's sleep. Fortunately, by getting the right information and making some changes in routines, most sleep problems can be eliminated.



WHY SLEEP IS SO IMPORTANT

Pediatricians agree that not getting enough sleep can cause children serious problems such as:

- Reduced coordination and reaction time; tired children are much more likely to get injured
- Difficulty paying attention and reduced memory retention, which results in less learning at school
- Increased irritability, rising frustration, and difficulty controlling emotions

GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

Children's need for sleep changes as they grow.Below are some guidelines on the right amount of sleep for your child, depending upon their age. The amounts include both nighttime sleep and daytime naps.

CHILD'S AGE	0-3 MONTHS	3-6 MONTHS	6-12 MONTHS	12-24 MONTHS	2-4 YEARS	4-7 YEARS	7-11 YEARS
Amount of sleep	14-20 hours	14-16 hours	13-15 hours	12-14 hours	11-13 hours	10-12 hours	10-12 hours or more

Changes in your child's life such as an illness, vacation, new home, or new caregiver can affect sleep. Be patient and stick to your bedtime routine and your child will be able to return to their regular sleep pattern soon.



SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS)

SIDS is the sudden death during sleep of a seemingly healthy baby. Although there is no known cause of SIDS, there are things that parents can do to help with prevention:

- Always place your baby to sleep on their back.
- Make sure your baby is sleeping on a firm surface.
- Put your baby to sleep in a room that is not too warm.
- Make sure your baby is in a non-smoking environment.
- Keep loose bedding, pillows, and toys away from a sleeping baby.
- Make sure your baby receives all recommended immunizations.



MORE SLEEP SAFETY

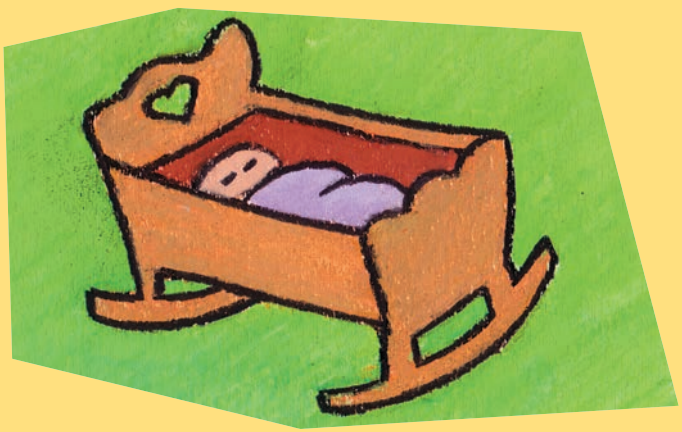
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends having the baby sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed. But whether your preference is in a room of their own, in a crib in your bedroom, in a co-sleeper next to your bed, or sharing your bed, good sleep safety habits are always important.

- If your baby sleeps in a crib, remove any items they can stand on to raise themselves higher and out of their crib.
- Watch for curtains, cords, or other dangerous items that your baby may be able to reach from their sleeping space.
- If you are sharing a bed with your baby, make sure your mattress is firm and flat. Sheets and blankets should be light. Your baby should not be able to fall out of the bed, or between the mattress and wall or headboard.

CREATING A BEDTIME ROUTINE

Children need structure to feel safe and in control. Developing a consistent bedtime routine is a way to provide children with the sense of security that they need to fall asleep. By setting a fixed bedtime and then doing the same activities in the same order every night, your child will be able to unwind and get the sleep they need. The routine should last 20-30 minutes and may include the following:

- Having a light, healthy snack
- Taking a warm bath
- Putting on pajamas
- Brushing teeth
- Reading books, singing songs, or listening to music together
- Saying goodnight, including lots of hugs and kisses



TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR CHILD TO SLEEP

- **Limit caffeine and sugar as these can stimulate children before bedtime.**
- **Keep bedtime calm. Television, video games, and active play make it hard for children to relax.**
- **Make sure your child's sleeping area is quiet, pleasant, and peaceful. Soft music and low light often help.**
- **Help your child to go to sleep before they are overly tired. An overly tired child may be too uncomfortable to fall asleep.**
- **Set a time limit for bedtime routines.**

SOME COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Many sleep problems get better as children grow older. If problems continue, ask your child's pediatrician for further support.

SLEEP PROBLEM	SLEEP SOLUTION
Nightmares are frightening dreams after which children often awaken. Children can remember their nightmares.	Go to your child immediately. Comfort and reassure them. Encourage them to talk about their dream. Help them to go back to sleep.
Night Terrors are more severe nightmares. They happen while a child is in a deep sleep and cannot be awakened. Children usually will not remember the night terror.	Stay calm and do not try to wake your child. Gently restrain your child if they try to leave the bed or move around too much. After a short time, your child will return to normal sleep.
Sleepwalking/talking also occurs during deep sleep. It is difficult to wake up children and they usually will not remember this state.	Keep exit doors locked so that your child cannot leave the house. Block stairways and clear the room of any potential tripping hazards. Do not wake your child, just gently lead them back to bed.
Bedwetting is very common among young children. Their bladders are still small, and they are still toilet learning.	Make sure your child uses the toilet and discourage drinking fluids right before bedtime. Protect the bed with a mattress cover. Do not blame or punish your child.

Some children use their favorite stuffed animal or blanket for comfort. Make sure the toy is safe and free from hazards, such as buttons or strings.

TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

GOOD NIGHT YOGA: A POSE-BY-POSE BEDTIME STORY
Mariam Gates, illustrated by Sarah Jane Hinder

CLOSE YOUR EYES
Kate Banks, illustrated by Georg Hallensleben

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
Kathy Henderson & Jennifer Eachus

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

MINDFUL MOMENTS AT BEDTIME
Paloma Rossa & Cottage Door Press, illustrated by Stephanie Fizer Colleman

ORGANIZATIONS

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