



Now that school is in full swing, is your child getting enough sleep?

There are many things in life that can get us off track, such as changing schedules and new responsibilities, like homework or studying. Ensuring your child consistently gets enough rest is crucial to their mental and physical health. Sleep helps restore our brain and body and prepare us for the next day. Children who are chronically sleep-deprived are more likely to suffer problems such as frequent illness or obesity, and may even be at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. They are also more likely to experience behavioral health problems, including:

- Feeling stressed, anxious or in a rotten mood, which may lead to depression.
- Becoming argumentative with friends or family members.
- Having trouble concentrating, which may negatively affect schoolwork.

Kids get better-quality sleep when their parents help them consistently practice good **sleep hygiene**. This could be a bedtime routine consisting of a warm bath or shower, book time instead of screen time, a cool and dark bedroom, and a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, even on weekends.

5 Ways to Help Your Child Get Enough Sleep

To encourage a smooth transition to bedtime every night, combine typical sleep hygiene strategies with some additional techniques.

1. Follow sleep-friendly daytime guidelines. Get your child to spend time outside during the morning. Early exposure to daylight helps set their internal clock, so they're tired at bedtime. Be sure your child gets plenty of daily exercise so that they're physically tired in the evening. Limit intake of caffeine and sugar, especially later in the day. And once your child outgrows naps, discourage sleeping in the middle of the day, which may prevent them from being tired at bedtime.



2. Keeping pre-bedtime activities calm. In the hour before bed, choose soothing activities to help your child unwind. Read, listen to music or have quality family time. Don't have arguments, tell scary stories or do stimulating activities that will energize your child when they should start to feel sleepy.

3. Only use the bed for sleep. Some children study, watch TV or play games in bed. During the pandemic, some even attended virtual school there. But using a bed as an activity space confuses the brain and can make it harder for children to fall asleep. Encourage your child to play and study in other parts of your home. Keep screens out of the bedroom, if possible. That may mean charging a cell phone downstairs overnight.



4. Try soothing sounds. Some research suggests listening to music at bedtime may help improve sleep quality in children. Consider playing calming songs as quiet background noise while your child rests.

5. Calculate bedtime by counting backwards. Figure out what time to put your child to bed by counting back from the time they wake up for school. The amount of sleep children need to function at their best varies by age:

- 3- to 5-year-olds: 10 to 13 hours
- 6- to 12-year-olds: 9 to 12 hours
- Teenagers: 8 to 10 hours

My Bedtime Routine Checklist

Make your child's bedtime routine fun! Use this checklist each night and encourage your child to check the box when they complete each activity. At the end of the week, give them a simple reward such as their favorite food, extra screen time or letting them choose a small toy at the store.

- Take a bath 
- Put on pajamas
- Brush teeth 
- Go to the bathroom
- Read a book 
- Turn off the light
- Sweet dreams

[Click here](#) to download our **Bedtime Routine Checklist** to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board (also available to [download in Spanish](#)).

This Checklist can help make your child's bedroom routine fun! Use this each night and encourage your child to check the box when they complete each activity. At the end of the week, give them a simple reward such as their favorite food, a choice of family game to play, or extra screen time (but not too close to bedtime!). Share your success stories by using [#OnOurSleevesJax](#) and [#OnOurSleeves](#) on social media.

Watch this video to see why a good night's sleep is important:



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Want to share your *On Our Sleeves* story? Just hit the reply button and tell us why you joined our community and how you're using resources from *On Our Sleeves*.

Sincerely,
Wolfson Children's Hospital

The mission of *On Our Sleeves* is to provide every community in America access to free, evidence-informed educational resources necessary for breaking stigmas about child mental health and

educating families and advocates. For more information, visit OnOurSleeves.org.

To access educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*, visit wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves.

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