



Beautiful Beginnings Sleep Tips for Infants Through Age 5

Why Sleep is Essential for Young Children

Good sleep is critical for a child's growth, development, mood, and overall well-being. Establishing healthy sleep habits early sets the foundation for lifelong sleep success.

Newborns (0–3 Months)

Sleep Needs: 14–17 hours per day (in short intervals)

- **Follow Baby's Lead:** Newborns don't have set sleep schedules. Feed and comfort them as needed.
- **Promote Day/Night Awareness:** Keep lights dim and interactions quiet during nighttime feedings and diaper changes.
- **Safe Sleep Environment:** Always place your baby on their back in a crib or bassinet with a firm mattress and no loose bedding, pillows, or toys.

Infants (4–11 Months)

Sleep Needs: 12–15 hours per day (including 2–3 naps)

- **Establish a Routine:** Create a calming bedtime routine, such as a warm bath, reading a book, or singing a lullaby.
- **Encourage Self-Soothing:** Place your baby in the crib when they're drowsy but awake, so they learn to fall asleep on their own.
- **Be Consistent:** Try to keep naps and bedtime at the same time every day, even on weekends.

Toddlers (1–2 Years)



Sleep Needs: 11–14 hours per day (including 1–2 naps)

- **Stick to a Schedule:** Keep bedtime and wake times consistent. A predictable routine helps toddlers feel secure.
- **Set Clear Boundaries:** Gently enforce rules like staying in bed and limiting pre-bed activities.
- **Limit Screen Time:** Avoid screens at least one hour before bed, as they can overstimulate young children.

Preschoolers (3–5 Years)

Sleep Needs: 10–13 hours per day (including 1 afternoon nap for younger preschoolers)

- **Create a Relaxing Environment:** Use blackout curtains, a white noise machine, or a nightlight if needed.
- **Encourage Independence:** Let your child pick their pajamas or bedtime story to make bedtime feel like a positive choice.
- **Avoid Sugary or Caffeinated Drinks:** Watch out for hidden sources of caffeine like chocolate, especially in the afternoon.

General Tips for All Ages

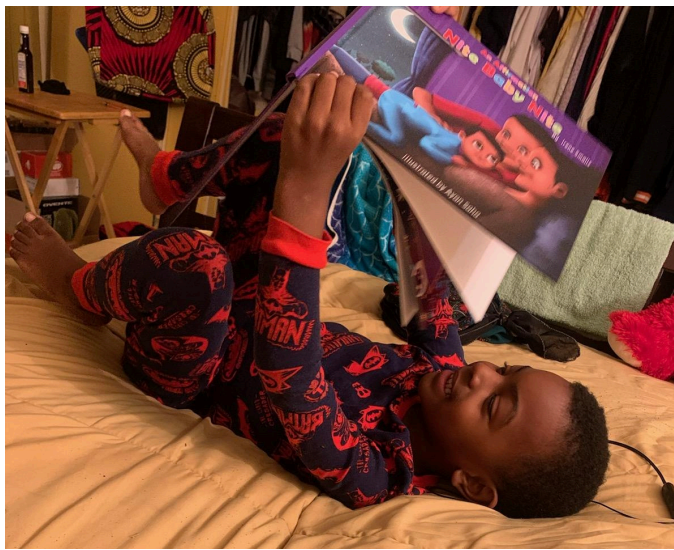
1. Make Sleep a Priority:

- Model healthy sleep habits by sticking to your own bedtime routine.
- Avoid irregular sleep patterns, which can disrupt children’s biological clocks.

2. Avoid Sleep Disruptors:

- Reduce stimulating activities before bed.
- Watch for signs of over tiredness, such as crankiness or hyperactivity, which can make it harder for kids to fall asleep.
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3. Handle Nighttime Wakings Calmly:



- Comfort your child briefly, reassure them, and encourage them to fall back asleep in their bed.

4. Adjust Schedules Gradually:

- If transitioning to a new bedtime, shift in 15–30 minute increments over several days.

5. Maintain a Healthy Sleep Environment:

- Keep the room quiet, dark, and cool (between 65–70°F).
- Use familiar comfort items like a blanket or stuffed animal for toddlers and preschoolers (if they're safe).

Common Sleep Challenges & Solutions

Challenge	Solution
Bedtime resistance	Use a bedtime chart and stick to routines to give children a sense of
Nighttime waking	Check for discomfort (e.g., hunger or teething) and soothe without
Transitioning from crib to bed	Make the new bed exciting with their favorite bedding and explain the “big kid” rules.
Dropping naps	Watch for signs of readiness and adjust bedtime earlier if naps are skipped.

When to Seek Help

If your child has frequent trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or shows signs of a sleep disorder, consult your pediatrician or a sleep specialist.

For more expert advice on children’s sleep health, visit [SleepWiseHealth.com](https://www.sleepwisehealth.com).

Helping families rest, grow, and thrive.