

Weaning



ARTICLE

Child Sleeping Habits

How do you help your child sleep through the night?. Good sleeping habits help healthy growth

6 mins
to read

▪ By Danial Ahmad , Author
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How do you help your child sleep through the night?

Good sleeping habits help healthy growth.

The quality and amount of sleep can also affect your child's memory, behaviour, moods and learning ability.

And with a little effort, you can help your child develop good sleeping habits that will encourage your little one's healthy growth development.

Good sleeping habits begin way before sleep time.

Here's how:

Preparing for bedtime - An hour before sleeping:

- **Wash down to freshen up for a cuddly sleep.**
- **It's pyjama time! Dress up to wind down for sleep.**
- **No more exciting or exerting play.**
- **Turn down the room lights.**
- **Keep the room cool.**
- **Put on some soft children's music if possible.**
- **Read a story.**

Stick to a schedule – put your little one to sleep at the same time every afternoon and night even on weekends.

Help your child fall asleep on his own – give your little one a soft, cuddly toy or blanket to keep him company instead of patting or singing him to sleep.

Have a nightlight – this gives comfort to your little one when he wakes up at night and helps him to settle back to sleep knowing he is in familiar surroundings.

Avoid TV watching to help your little one fall asleep. In fact, keep the TV out of the room and in the hall.

Don't let your child nap too close to bedtime as this will disrupt his sleeping habits.

The importance of a good bedtime

Did you know, just like adults, children need a good night sleep too! Getting proper sleep is important for your child, as he needs the energy to get through the day and not be lethargic or tired.

If putting him to bed may not be that easy, try making it fun! Here are some simple tips:

Wind down	Turn on soft music and turn down the lights half an hour before bedtime. A nice warm bath will help settle their restlessness.
Make bedtime pleasant	Talk to them about the earlier part of the day and what they would want to dream about as you dress them in their pyjamas.

Give them their favourite bedtime companions	Whether it's their favourite soft toy, blanket or pillow, this creates a familiar and comforting environment for them.
Make it one of their favourite times	Children love bedtime stories. Choose a book that suits the age of your child and spend time reading together in bed so that they will look forward to the next day's continuation.
Give lots of warm cuddles and kisses	It's a "feel good session" with your little one and you as well! What your little one enjoys, they will look forward to. It's a great way to end the day.

Apart from the ideas above, you may also want to learn what motivates your child and incorporate that into your bedtime routine. Yes, make bedtime a routine so that your child will know what time and what to expect. Children feel safe and comfortable when they have a routine!

Sleeping patterns

From 6 to 12 months

At this age, children sleep 15 hours each day. Generally, sleep is split into night and two or three naps in the morning, early afternoon and late afternoon. However, there are no rules and every child will find his own rhythm.

From 1 to 3 years

Sometimes your child will not want to go to sleep because he doesn't want to leave your side. Now your child will be sleeping around 13 to 15 hours a day. Gradually, he will nap just once in the day in the early afternoon.

Bedtime rituals

Your child needs to feel comfortable and loved by you to spend a pleasant night. It is hard for him to be separated from Mum or Dad at night. Cuddles, music, soft lighting and the same routine every evening will help your child go to sleep.

"Crepuscular" children – who become agitated when night falls – will do well with a bath at this moment. They will then be calmer and more relaxed before going to bed. For the ritual to be effective, it must be identical each time. So, avoid rocking your child or taking him for a walk as he can get too accustomed to this and will demand the same level of attention every evening before bedtime.

Putting your child to bed is the ideal opportunity for your child to **become independent**. He needs to learn to fall asleep on his own. A blanket or thumb can play a comforting role and reassure him in bed. As he grows up, he may want to tell you about his day or ask you to read a story. Bedtime will then become a special time to spend with your child.

When your child wakes up at night

There are many different reasons why your child wakes up at night; teething, a change in his diet or fear of being alone. These events are so important that they can disrupt your child's **sleeping habits**. Your child may babble away in the middle of the night or sob. To make sure your child doesn't realise that he can attract your attention simply by crying, avoid rushing straight into his bedroom.

If his crying continues, check if your child is okay without making too much noise or switching on the light. Comfort him and then leave him to fall back to sleep. Avoid bringing your child into your bed as he will grow accustomed to this and things will be more difficult later on. Putting your child to bed is a moment of

separation – your child needs to know that you will be there for him again the next day.

When your child grows up

As he grows up, bedtime can seem to him as a moment when the playing stops. In some instances, you may constantly have to ask him to calm down and this may end with shouts and tears. To avoid sulking and fits of anger or tears, set a regular bedtime. If your child wakes up, put him back to bed. Remain firm and avoid giving in to all his demands.

Generally, children want to delay the time at which they go to bed, but they may also be scared of something, which parents need to try to understand to help them overcome their fears. To prevent your child from thinking that going to bed is a punishment, avoid shouting “Go to bed!”. Sleeping can become a pleasurable moment for your child, a time when he is alone to let his imagination and dreams run wild.