



# KIDZZZSLEEP

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## Guidelines for Bedtime

- Since families' lifestyles, and children's sleep and development needs are different, there is no one ideal bedtime for children. The best way to set a good bedtime for your child is to first decide how many hours of sleep are needed a day. A guideline for average amounts of total daily sleep at different ages is attached. The next step is to consider how best to fit this into the family and child's schedule. For example, if your child seems to need eleven and a half hours of sleep a day, is enrolled in morning nursery school or daycare program, and doesn't have a reasonable sleep/wake schedule is 7:30 PM to 7:00 AM. **The most important point is to make sure that your child receives enough sleep every day to feel alert and well rested.**
- Be sure that your child is ready for sleep before putting him to bed. This may seem obvious, but sometimes parents set a bedtime more for their own convenience. Alternatively, some children's biological clocks make them more likely to be "night owls". These children may have difficulty with an earlier bedtime. Putting children to bed when they are not tired increases the likelihood of bedtime struggles.
- Make sure your child's bed and bedroom are inviting and comfortable.
- Once you have decided on your child's bedtime, be consistent about it. It will make it easier for her to accept a bedtime if it falls at the same time every day. Establishing a regular bedtime helps to set your child's internal clock. Children who have a regular sleep and wake time also feel more rested. It is alright to make occasional exceptions, but too much inconsistency can create problems.
- Be sure to include a regular bedtime ritual as part of your child's wind-down time before bed. An evening bath and bedtime story are good ways to help your child calm down after a busy day. Avoid exciting, high-energy activities within 1 hour of bedtime (this includes things like playing outside, running around, role play, exciting TV shows or videos.) For most children, bedtime routines should take about 20 minutes. Children who have trouble with difficulty falling asleep may need a longer or more soothing

bedtime routine.

- A transitional or love object can be a source of comfort to a child and help him make the transition to sleep. Have your child select a favored toy/object such as a stuffed animal, doll, or blanket that she would like to bring to bed. Each night, offer your child this same object, but do not force your child to sleep with it. Try to have this same object with you during snuggle time/quiet time.
- Although it is natural to feel angry when your child misbehaves, try not to lose your temper. Your goal is to make bedtime a secure time of the day for your child.

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Last modified: Sunday, May 21, 2006