



**SLEEP
WELL**



**Helping toddlers and pre-schoolers
to sleep well (1 - 5 years)**

Active play, healthy food and sleep play an important part in your child's growth and development, but how much sleep is enough. And how can you help your child (and yourself) get a better night's sleep?

How much sleep does your child need?

Toddlers

As your toddler grows they will start to need less sleep during the day and should average between 11 to 14 hours a day, including day time naps.

Every toddler is different but on average most should nap about 2 hours at 18 months, an hour and a half at 2 years old and more like 45 minutes at 3 years old.

Of course some children will sleep longer than this during the day and others won't nap at all. It's a good idea to try and time your toddler's nap for just after lunch as this will refresh your little one for the afternoon and shouldn't affect their night time sleep.

Pre-schoolers

Some children will need more sleep and others less but as a general guide your pre-schooler should be having between 10 to 13 hours sleep, and for some children this will still include a short daytime nap. If your child has outgrown naps they will need a solid 11 to 12 hours sleep a night.



Create a relaxing bedtime routine

A calm, regular bedtime routine will help your child learn how to settle themselves to sleep. Cleaning their teeth, giving them a relaxing, warm bath ready for a bedtime story can be a comforting routine to follow.

Try to have the same routine at the same time every night, ideally before 8pm. Your child's bedroom should be dark and quiet and kept at a temperature of about 18 to 24°C.

Avoid drinks containing caffeine during the day (which includes cola, tea, coffee, sports drinks and hot chocolate). In the hour before bedtime encourage quiet play and avoid fizzy or sugary drinks and snacks.

Getting your toddler to sleep at night

Making sure your toddler goes to sleep in their own bed is a good way to help them get a good night's sleep. If your toddler drifts off to sleep in your arms, or watching the TV, they'll associate this with falling to sleep and will want the same if they wake in the night. It's also helpful to avoid any TV or other electronic devices for at least an hour before your toddler's bedtime as the light from the screen disrupts natural production of the sleep hormone melatonin.

Place your toddler in their own bed / cot to end the bedtime routine, say goodnight as you usually would and then make sure you leave the room. If your toddler cries, go back in after a few minutes, reassure them and leave the room again. Repeat this if your toddler continues to cry, leaving it a little longer each time before you go back into the room. Eventually you should find they settle and fall asleep.

Why is sleep so important?

Sleep is essential for your child's growth and development. A well-rested youngster will also have better behaviour and be more able to meet their full potential in every part of their lives.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The advice in this leaflet applies to all children, but children and young people with SEND are more likely to have sleep difficulties. The advice available from your health visitor or the staff at your local children's centre will help improve the sleep of most children, but occasionally additional support is required if your child's sleep difficulties are persistent or linked to their condition, medication or if they are in pain. This additional support can be accessed through your health visitor or your local children's centre.



Need more advice?

If your child is still having problems sleeping, or you would like more advice about establishing a routine, speak to your health visitor or a member of staff at your local children's centre who are able to advise and offer tailored support.

Find contact details for your local children's centre online:
www.knowsleychildrenscentres.co.uk

Contact your local health visiting team on:

Kirkby Team	Tel: 0151 244 3066
Manor Farm Team	Tel: 0151 290 4990
North Huyton Team	Tel: 0151 480 4066
Whiston Team	Tel: 0151 426 0611
Halewood Team	Tel: 0151 486 4011



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