

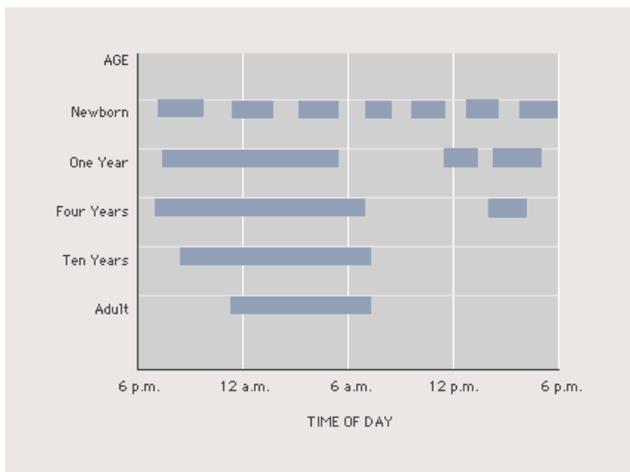
## YOU & YOUR CHILD

### ***Introduction:***

Sleep is essential to a child's well being and growth. It promotes learning, attentiveness, memory and success. Children who get enough sleep are less prone to behavioral problems and moodiness. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to help their children develop good sleep habits, even beginning in infancy.

### ***What are normal sleep patterns in infants & young children:***

Sleep patterns change considerably throughout the first several years of life, as is depicted by the gray bars in the graph below.



### ***How much sleep should my child get (total hours including naps):***

Age	Hours Of Sleep
0 - 2 months	10.5 - 18
2 - 12 months	14 - 15
1 - 3 years	12 - 14
3 - 5 years	11 - 13
5 - 12 years	10 - 11

### ***Common myths and miseducation:***

**Myth #1:** Children should sleep on their stomachs.

- **Fact:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be put to sleep on their backs, as this lowers the risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Parents should also avoid placing young children to sleep on any soft surface, including a water bed, sofa or pillow.

**Myth #2:** Children should be fully asleep before being put to bed.

- **Fact:** Children should be put to bed when they are drowsy, but awake.

**Myth #3:** Children will sleep longer at night if they do not nap during the day.

- **Fact:** For young children, nap and nighttime sleep are both necessary and independent of each other. Children who nap well usually sleep better at night. Although children differ, naps up to two hours duration are expected after six months of age. They are generally discontinued between ages 2-5 years.

### ***Children thrive on routine:***

Good sleep habits in children begin with following a nightly routine. A bedtime ritual allows your child to relax and fall asleep easily. A typical routine may entail the following:

1. Eat a light snack.
2. Take a bath and brush teeth.
3. Put on pajamas.
4. Read a story.
5. Put your child to bed.
6. Say goodnight and leave the room.

### ***Optimizing sleep hygiene in children:***

1. Bedtime should occur at the same time each night.
2. Bedtime rituals should last no more than 30 minutes. Rituals should be a positive experience without the use of television or video games. Your child's favorite relaxing and non-stimulating activities, like reading, should immediately precede bedtime.
3. The bedtime environment (e.g. light and temperature) should be kept consistent all night long.
4. Big meals should be avoided within 4 hours of bedtime. A light snack is OK.
5. Avoid giving children caffeinated products including cocoa less than 6 hours before bedtime.
6. Exercise can promote good sleep, but not within 2 hours of bedtime.
7. Keep the bedroom dark. If necessary, use a small nightlight. Expose your child to natural sunlight soon after awakening in the morning.
8. Keep the noise level low.
9. A firm and consistent approach to a stall tactic will help avoid reinforcing the behavior. If your child needs to use the bathroom, send him by himself or herself. This limits more contact with you. Don't give in to requests for one more kiss, another story, a drink or a tissue.
10. Keep the TV out of your child's bedroom.

11. Children should sleep only in their own bed. Co-sleeping not only promotes poor sleep hygiene, but also increases the risk of suffocation, strangulation and SIDS in children.
12. Children should be encouraged to fall asleep on their own. They should not require a parent to help them fall asleep. Children who are able to fall asleep on their own are more likely to maintain sleep through the night or fall back to sleep if they awaken.
13. Avoid going into your child's room if they wake up at night, unless they are sick or clearly require assistance. It is important send a consistent message that they can and are expected to fall asleep on their own. If you must enter your child's room, do not turn on the lights or remove him or her from bed unless it's absolutely necessary.
14. Except for younger children who need naps, avoid naps during the day.

***Signs that your child may have a sleep disorder that requires intervention:***

- Snoring
- Your child pauses when breathing during sleep
- Child sleeps in odd positions
- Child can't fall asleep or stay asleep at night
- Child has difficulty staying awake during the day
- School performance suffers
- Child has behavioral problems and mood swings

***Useful Web Information:***

<http://www.sleepforkids.org/html/sheet.html>

[http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/491438\\_2](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/491438_2)

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/Jobs/benefits/health/Pages/TheImportanceofSleep.aspx>