



FOR CAREGIVERS

# The Importance of Sleep






## How much sleep do kids need?

Getting a good night's sleep is so important to our mental and physical health. Sleep helps our brains learn new things, pay attention, and remember.

Recommended Sleep Totals (AASM, 2016)  
in 24-hour Period

Age Range	Recommended
School-Aged Children (6-12 years)	9-12 hours
Adolescents (13-18 years)	8-10 hours

## Common sleep problems include:

-  • Bedtime refusal.
-  • Difficulty falling and staying asleep.
-  • Requiring a caregiver to be present in order to fall asleep.
-  • Nightmares and nighttime fears.
-  • Parasomnia including sleep terrors, sleepwalking and sleep talking.

## Sleep problems are associated with a number of physical and mental health concerns, including:

- Excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Fatigue.
- Irritability or moodiness.
- Hyperactivity.
- Inattention.
- Increase in tantrums or other disruptive behaviors.
- Decline in grades or academic functioning.
- Increased anxiety or depression.
- Difficulty managing stress.



## Parents should set a good example.

Model what you ask your kids to do and even say what you are doing out loud, "I'd like to watch my show right now, but I know it's too close to bedtime and I want to make sure I can sleep well tonight."

## Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App

Search Parenting at  
Meal and Playtime on Apple  
Store or Google Play



## App Highlights...

- Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
- Resources for parents organized by age
- Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
- Easy sign-up
- Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more



*These handouts are the property of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Ohio Department of Health and may not be altered without express permission.*



FOR YOUTH

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• **Limit time spent in the bedroom.**

Ideally, kids should be in bed only when they are sleeping and not when while watching TV, scrolling on phones, doing school work, or eating. This helps to create a strong connection between sleep and bed.



• **Avoid naps.** In a perfect world, there would be no naps starting in early elementary school. If a nap is needed, set a timer to wake up in 20-30 minutes.



• **Get outside and be active.** Go for a walk, play basketball or throw a football, jump rope, play tag, dance.



• **Avoid screens.** Stop screen use at least 30 minutes before bedtime. But if this is not possible, avoid using screens after bedtime.

- Put screens away from the bed so they cannot be accessed easily.

- Turn electronics off at a set time at night and charge them outside of the bedroom.

- Avoid TVs or video game systems in the bedrooms, especially at bedtime.

## Creating a healthy sleep routine

Pick two or three changes to make and give them time to work (two weeks or so). Sleep habits and routines may look different for each person. Remember – perfection is not the goal.



• **Stick to a schedule,** including waking up and going to bed around the same time each day (yes, even on weekends).



• **Create a consistent bedtime routine,** with activities done in the same order about 20-30 minutes before going to bed. For example:

- Take a shower.
- Brush teeth.
- Use the bathroom.
- Change into sleep clothes.
- Read a book or listen to calming music or a relaxation script.

## For 15-18 year olds

It's really easy for teens' sleep to get off track. Many teens fall into the habit of staying up very late at night and sleeping in late the next day, especially on weekends or days off school.

If you have become used to going to bed late and waking up late, slowly start waking up 30 minutes earlier every day over several days. And then go to bed 30 minutes earlier. These small changes over time will make the adjustment a little easier.

Work with your caregiver to create a sleep plan that both of you think will work. Be willing to make compromises.