

# May is National Better Sleep Month

## Bedtime Matters

The amount of sleep a child gets each night is more important than you may think. Children have very busy days. There's school, running around with friends, going to sports practice or other activities, doing homework, and spending mealtime with family before taking a bath, reading books, and finally ending their day by going to bed. Sleep lets their bodies get rest for the next day. When they do not get enough sleep, the results could result in compounding concerns.

## Impact of Lack of Sleep

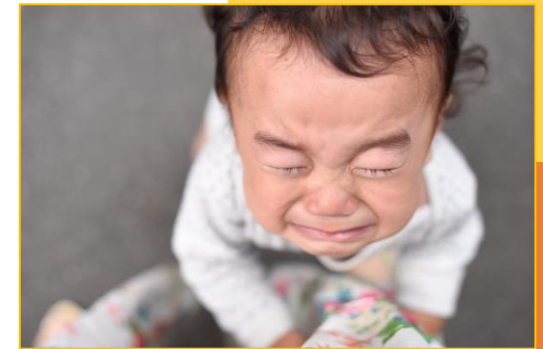
Sleep is essential to every process in the body, affecting our physical and mental functioning the next day, our ability to fight disease and develop immunity, and our metabolism and chronic disease risk. If a child does not get the proper amount of sleep they need daily, they experience differences in brain structure and more problems with mood and thinking compared to those who got sufficient sleep. (continued)

## How much sleep does a child need?

- Infants (4 to 12 months): 12 to 16 hours (including naps)
- Toddlers (1 to 2 years): 11 to 14 hours (including naps)
- Preschoolers (3 to 5 years): 10 to 13 hours (including naps)
- School-aged children (6 to 12 years): 9 to 12 hours

## Impact of Lack of Sleep (continued)

Decreased brain development, learning problems, and more frequent negative emotions can result. A regular lack of consistent sleep can also contribute to weight management problems, growth issues and increased frequency of illnesses.



# MLC May Family Minutes

A resource from our family to yours



## Bedtime Routines

Much of what we know about making a child feel good and be successful starts with the established idea that children thrive when there are rules and a routine. This is even more so when it comes to wrapping up their day and winding down to rest. To create positive bedtime routine, it is important to share reminders with your child about when bedtime is coming, stating something like, “First we eat dinner, then we play, followed by taking a bath and putting on our pajamas. Then, we read a story and get into bed to go to sleep.” The routine might take about 30 to 45 minutes. It is also important to keep bedtimes consistent regardless of visitors, travel or seasons. Most children will fall asleep within 20 minutes of going to bed.

## Turn the Tablet Off

Many parents have fallen prey to the quiet time that offering a tablet or telephone to a child can bring at the end of a busy day. Still, there is evidence to show that any screen use right before bed could negatively impact sleep. One reason is that the blue light emitted from these devices can affect the secretion of melatonin, the hormone that helps signal to the body that it is time to fall asleep. Other reasons include the content of what is on the screen. All screen time, if offered to a child, should end at least 1 hour prior to bedtime. Keeping in mind that a child under the age of two years should have no screen time regardless of the time of day.

## Bedtime Books

Making reading a part of the bedtime process is a gentle way to create a warm, calm space. Any book can be used, but often families will select a book with a character or adventure that can be revisited. For a younger child, a suggestion would be a 365 bedtime book such as *365 Bedtime Stories* by Christine Alison. As children age, parents can look to smaller chapter books within a series such as *The Magic Tree House* books by Mary Pope Osbourne.

<https://www.amazon.com/365-Bedtime-Stories-Christine-Allison/dp/0767900960>

## Bedtime Routine

- clean up toys 
- go potty 
- take a bath 
- brush teeth 
- clothes in hamper 
- put on PJs 
- read a book 
- goodnight kiss 

## Resources

<https://sph.umich.edu/pursuit/2020posts/why-sleep-is-so-important-to-your-health.html>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/sleep-growth.html>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/sleep-growth.html>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/not-tired.html>

<https://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/conditions/sleep-deprivation/>