

Sleep Hygiene for Children

Follow these tips to help your child adopt good bedtime routines.

1. Keep **consistent bedtimes and wake times** every day of the week. Late weekend nights or sleeping-in can throw off a sleep schedule for days.
2. **Avoid spending lots of non-sleep time in bed** – spending hours lying on a bed doing other activities before bedtime keeps our brains from associating the bed with sleep time.
3. **Your child’s bedroom should be cool, quiet and comfortable.**
4. Children who stare at clocks should have **their clocks turned away** from them.
5. Bedtime should follow a **predictable sequence of events**, such as brushing teeth and reading a story.
6. **Avoid high stimulation activities just before bed**, such as watching television, playing video games or exercise. Do not do these things during a nighttime awakening either. It is best not to have video games, televisions or telephones in your child’s bedroom.
7. Having **physical exercise as part of the day** often helps with sleep time many hours later.
8. **Relaxation techniques** such as performing deep, slow abdominal breaths or imagining positive scenes like being on a beach can help your child relax.
9. **Avoid caffeine (sodas, chocolate, tea, coffee)** in the afternoons/evenings. Even if caffeine doesn’t prevent falling asleep it can still lead to shallow sleep or frequent awakenings.
10. **If your child is awake in bed tossing and turning, it is better for them to get out of bed** to do a low stimulation activity (e.g., reading), then return to bed later. This keeps the bed from becoming associated with sleeplessness. If still awake after 20 to 30 minutes, spend another 20 minutes out of bed before lying down again.
11. **Worry time should not be at bedtime.** Children with this problem can try having a “worry time” scheduled earlier when they are encouraged to think about and discuss their worries with a parent.
12. **Children should be put to bed drowsy, but still awake.** Letting them fall asleep in other places forms habits that are difficult to break.

To Learn More

- Sleep Disorders Center
206-987-5072
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

13. **Security objects at bedtime are often helpful** for children who need a transition to feel safe and secure when their parent is not present. Try to include a doll, toy or blanket when you cuddle or comfort your child, which may help them adopt the object.
14. **When checking on your child at night, checks should be “brief and boring.”** The purpose is to reassure your child you are present and that they are OK.
15. If your child is never drowsy at the planned bedtime, you can **try a temporary delay of bedtime** by 30 minute increments until your child appears sleepy, so that they experience falling asleep more quickly once they get into bed. The bedtime should then be gradually advanced earlier until the desired bed time is reached.
16. **Keep a sleep diary** to keep track of naps, sleep times and activities to find patterns and target problem areas when things are not working.

Primary reference: *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep* by Jodi Mindell and Judith Owens. Used with permission.

Higiene del sueño para niños

Siga estas pautas para ayudar a su hijo a adoptar rutinas positivas a la hora de acostarse.

1. Mantener un **horario fijo para acostarse y levantarse** durante la semana. Acostarse o levantarse tarde los fines de semana puede alterar el horario por varios días.
2. **Evitar pasar mucho tiempo en cama si no es para dormir:** pasar horas acostado haciendo otras actividades antes de dormir previene que el cerebro relacione la cama con la hora de dormir.
3. **El dormitorio de su hijo debe ser fresco, tranquilo y cómodo.**
4. Si el niño se fija mucho en el reloj, cámbielo a **donde él no lo vea.**
5. Tener una rutina a la hora de acostarse, es una **secuencia de acciones** como cepillarse los dientes y leer un cuento.
6. **Evitar actividades muy estimulantes antes de acostarse** como ver televisión, videojuegos o hacer ejercicio. Tampoco haga estas actividades si se despierta durante la noche. Es mejor que no tenga videojuegos, televisión ni teléfonos en el dormitorio.
7. Hacer **ejercicio durante el día** lo ayuda a dormir horas más tarde.
8. **Las técnicas de relajación**, como la respiración abdominal lenta y profunda o imaginar escenas positivas, como estar en la playa, pueden hacer que su hijo se relaje.
9. **Evitar la cafeína (sodas, chocolate, té, café)** en la tarde o noche. Aun cuando la cafeína no le quite el sueño, puede llevar a un sueño liviano o a despertarse con frecuencia.
10. **Si su hijo está despierto y dando vueltas en la cama, es mejor que se levante** para hacer alguna actividad poco estimulante (como leer) y al rato volver a la cama. Esto evita asociar la cama con el insomnio. Si sigue despierto después de 20 o 30 minutos, deje pasar otros 20 minutos antes de volver a acostarse.
11. **La hora de acostarse no es momento para pensar en preocupaciones.** Los niños con este problema pueden tener una “hora fija para preocuparse”, es un momento para pensar y hablar de sus preocupaciones con los padres.
12. **Los niños deben acostarse con sueño, pero aun despiertos.** Dejar que se duerman en otros lugares forma un hábito difícil de romper.

Más información

- Centro de Trastornos del Sueño
206-987-5072
- Consulte con el proveedor de atención médica de su hijo
- seattlechildrens.org

Servicio gratuito de intérprete

- En el hospital, solicítelo a la enfermera.
- Fuera del hospital, llame a nuestra línea gratuita de interpretación: 1-866-583-1527. Dígale al intérprete la extensión o el nombre de la persona que necesita.



13. **Un objeto de seguridad a la hora de acostarse puede ayudar al niño** que necesita un momento de transición y sentirse seguro cuando los padres no están presentes. Use una muñeca, juguete o cobija cuando abrace o consuele a su niño, quizás se apegue a él.
 14. **Cuando pase a ver a su niño en la noche, debe ser un momento "corto y aburrido"**. El propósito es que su hijo sepa que usted está presente y que todo está bien.
 15. Si su niño nunca tiene sueño a su hora de acostarse, **puede posponer la hora temporalmente** por períodos de 30 minutos a la vez, hasta que el niño tenga sueño. Así sabrá lo que es quedarse dormido rápidamente en su cama. La hora de acostarse debe ir volviendo gradualmente hasta alcanzar la hora deseada.
- Lleve un diario** del sueño, apunte las siestas que toma, horarios de dormir y actividades. Esto puede ayudar identificar patrones y resolver algo que no funcione.

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