

Good Night, Sleep Tight: Sleep Tips from Sleep Number

Regardless of age, all children need sleep to help them be happy, healthy and productive in school, at home and during after-school activities. Sleep is just as important as diet and exercise, but it's often overlooked. It helps little ones grow, beats germs, affects weight, protects the heart, boosts learning and increases attention and concentration.

In addition to having the SleepIQ Kids™ bed, here are some tips on how to help kids get their best sleep.

Routines Are Best for Cozy Rest

- Develop age-appropriate bedtime routines with your kids and stick to them, even on weekends. Why? According to a [2014 study](#) by the National Sleep Foundation, children who followed bedtime rules averaged an hour more of sleep a night, helping them concentrate and perform better in school. And, it helps prevent meltdowns.
- At least one hour before bedtime, get your kids in the sleep zone by asking them to turn off bright lights, put away electronics (that means no texting, games or social networking!), set aside clothes for the next day and brush their teeth.

Make Sure They Get Enough “Vitamin Z”

- **Preschool-aged kids:** These little sleepyheads need a daily dose of 11 to 13 hours of rest. Help your kids understand the value of a good night's sleep by telling a story, with Mr. Z as the sleep hero who defeats evil sleep villains (like eating candy before bed and breaking the rules by staying up late).
- **School-aged kids:** Ten hours of shuteye will do the trick for school-aged kids. Too little sleep impairs their ability to learn new information, which can affect concentration and schoolwork.
- **Tweens and teens:** Nine to 10 hours of rest each night is needed as kids enter adolescence. Between the ages of 10 to 15, the onset of melatonin shifts, resulting in a sleep shift. Changes in light exposure contribute to this shift, so keep screen time to a minimum before bedtime for this device-loving group, since bright light can impact melatonin release and make it difficult to sleep.

Turn Bedtime into Happy Time

- Avoid using “Go to your room!” and an early bed time as punishments. Instead, reward your kids for going to bed on time and following their sleep routines.
- Bedrooms should be a place of peace and restfulness, and bedtime should be seen as the perfect time to rest so tomorrow they can be the best.

Help Kids Sleep Deep

- **Dim the light at night:** If your kids need a night light, place it near the floor. Consider light-blocking shades or curtains, too. Light disrupts the release of melatonin, making it tough for wee ones to fall and stay asleep.
- **Not too hot, not too cold, juuuust right:** Turn the thermostat in your kids' bedrooms between 65 to 68 degrees, with about 65 percent humidity. At this temperature, their bodies don't have to do anything to create or shed heat to compensate for being too warm or too cold.
- **Soothe in to slumber:** Download a white noise app or use a fan to soothe kids to sleep. It lessens the chance they'll be awakened by the dog barking or grown-ups talking in a nearby room.
- **Cover up:** Whether it's sheets that protect against allergens, or ones that wick away sweat, you can find bedding to meet your kids' exact needs. Since your kids spend more than one-third of their day sleeping, upgrading their bedding is worth every penny.

Sources:

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- Dim the lights: <http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-news/lights-out-good-nights-sleep>
- Temperature/white noise: Interview with Dr. Phyllis Zee, director of Sleep Disorders Center at Northwestern Univ. – http://www.today.com/id/11641852/ns/today-today_health/t/your-bedroom-preventing-good-nights-rest/#.VKGJaV4CME