

Sleep

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following sleep guidelines.¹

Age	Recommended Sleep Hours per 24 Hour Period
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)
Gradeschoolers: 6 to 12 years	9 to 12 hours
Teens 13 to 18 years	8 to 10 hours
<small>Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, Hall WA, Kotagal S, Lloyd RM, Malow BA, Maski K, Nichols C, Quan SF, Rosen CL. Recommended amount of sleep for pediatric populations: a consensus statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine. 2016 Jun 15;12(06):785-6.</small>	

Experts recommend that a toddler, between the ages of one and two, get between 11 to 14 hours of sleep, and between the ages of three to five, get about 10 to 13 hours of sleep.² This is split between daily naps and night-time sleep. Young toddlers typically take two naps a day but will begin not needing that second nap somewhere between the age of one and two.

A typical sleep and nap schedule might look like this. If your child gets up around 7 am, a 10 o'clock nap prepares them for lunch and afternoon play. They might go back down for another nap at around 2 p.m. When they start to drop the second nap, you will want to shift the first nap to soon after lunch. They may nap for a couple of hours. Then they'll be up for some more playtime and dinner.

If you're a working parent, check with your daycare provider for the nap schedule they use and stick with it on the days you are home with your child if you can. Also ask them how much sleep your child gets each day so you can make sure they get to bed early enough to get adequate sleep.

Suggestions to encourage healthy sleep in your toddler are:³

- Make sleep a *priority*.
- Keep your toddler *active* during the day.
- Avoid *screen* time at least one hour before bedtime.
- Model good sleep habits for your child.
- Stay *consistent*.

Sleep Challenges

Toddlers wake up in the night for a lot of reasons such as teething, growing pains, stomach aches, needing to go potty or a diaper change, and even anxiety. Or sometimes they just wake up and want to play. You will have to remind them that nighttime is sleep time for everyone.

Reassure them that you are close by, and they are safe. Keep the lights out in their room, except for a little night

light, and your voice low and soothing. If they need to go to the bathroom or need a diaper change, then take care of it, but it's right back to bed afterward. Help them to understand that it's okay if they wake up. But they need to stay in bed and will eventually fall right back to sleep.

Many toddlers struggle with falling asleep. Reassure them that it's okay to take time to go to sleep. Teach them that it's important to stay in bed, even if they can't fall right to sleep. Make sure, before bedtime, that all of their needs have been met. If they call out to you and you know that all their needs were met, their room is comfortable, and they're not sick, then try the following:

- Wait several seconds before answering and wait a little longer each time they call to allow them time to fall asleep.
- Reassure your toddler that you are there, and they are fine.
- Each time you have to respond to your toddler, try to do it from the doorway instead of entering their room.
- And finally, each time they call, remind them that it's time to go to sleep.

Things to try if your toddler won't stay in bed are:

- When it's time for lights out, remind your toddler to stay in bed until you come for them.
- If they get out of bed, then calmly and gently lead them back to bed and tell them they need to stay in bed.
- Praise your child for getting back in bed and then leave the room.
- Reassure your child that you will come back and check on them throughout the night.

You will likely have to repeat this several times throughout the night and for several days until they adjust. Eventually you will teach your child that they must stay in bed until bedtime is over.⁷

Sleep Environment

Finally, make sure your child's room and bed are comfortable. Their room should be dark, with the exception of a nightlight and kept cool. Keep toys out of their bed, except for a "lovie", like a beloved stuffed toy or comforting blanket. Most children can fall asleep with a little noise. You should encourage this without lots of gimmicks or gadgets, but, if you have a sensitive sleeper, and things like cars driving by or barking dogs keep them awake, then try a little white noise, like a fan running in the background, to help them relax.⁶

Resources include:

1. "American Academy of Pediatrics Supports Childhood Sleep Guidelines." American Academy of Pediatrics/ Aap.org, 13 June 2013, www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx. Accessed 3/28/2019
2. Paruthi S;Brooks LJ;D'Ambrosio C;Hall WA;Kotagal S;Lloyd RM;Malow BA;Maski K;Nichols C;Quan SF;Rosen CL;Troester MM;Wise MS; "Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations: A Consensus Statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine." Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine : JCSM : Official Publication of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 15 June 2016, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27250809/. Accessed 3/28/2019
3. "Healthy Sleep Habits: How Many Hours Does Your Child Need?" HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics, 16 Nov. 2020, healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Healthy-Sleep-Habits-How-Many-Hours-Does-Your-Child-Need.aspx. Accessed 3/28/2019
4. Staff Writer. "Signs Your Child Is Sleep Deprived | Sleep.org." Sleep.org, Sleep.org, 8 Dec. 2021, www.sleep.org/signs-your-child-isnt-sleeping-enough/.
5. "Naps (for Parents) - Nemours Kidshealth." Edited by Mary L. Gavin, KidsHealth, The Nemours Foundation, June 2020, kidshealth.org/en/parents/naps.html. Accessed 3/28/2019
6. "Toddler Bedtime Trouble: Tips for Parents." HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics, 6 Dec. 2011, www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Bedtime-Trouble.aspx. Accessed 3/28/2019
7. "Big Kid Beds: When to Make the Switch." HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics, 5 Sept. 2013, www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Big-Kid-Beds-When-To-Make-the-Switch.aspx. Accessed 3/28/2019
8. Williams, Glenda, MD. Pediatrician -- Interview.