



Creating a Bedtime Routine for Healthy Sleep Habits

*For children ages 6 months onwards

Sleep is a skill that needs to be learned, just as are eating and toileting. A child needs an adult to establish a good sleep routine for a child to understand and learn from. Create an environment and an expectation for your child to sleep and be consistent with your methods. When your child is crying let them know that you are near, but that it is time to sleep and gently put them back in bed. Consistently putting your child to bed and helping them learn to self-soothe will create healthy sleep habits to last a lifetime.

Create a Space for Sleep

- A crib or mat on the floor
- Black out curtains
- Low stimulus environment (no toys, few books)
- Optional: Swaddle, sleepsack, for older children - blanket and/or stuffed toy

Create a Routine for Bedtime

This routine should be the same each night, although the caregivers may change

- Bath
- Pajamas,
- Bedtime snack
- Books
- Bed

Create a routine for Falling Asleep

- Ensure regular and routine times for going to bed and waking up
- Allow your child to fall asleep independent of nursing, patting, rocking or soothing
- Place your child on their backs, sleepy but not asleep and allow them to sooth themselves to sleep
- When your child awakes during the night allow them to self-soothe back to sleep if possible.
- By eight - 10 months a child no longer needs to nurse through the night

Regressions and Aiding Poor Sleep Habits

- Recommit to creating a space and a routine for sleep
- Observe to understand what is inhibiting sleep - is it too cold, light, is your child hungry, etc? and change the space accordingly
- Commit to consistently practicing a new routine for at least three weeks before changing any part of the routine
- Your sleep needs are important too. Create a space and routine for sleep that works for your whole family.