



where children are celebrated

Sleep for 2-4 year olds February 2020

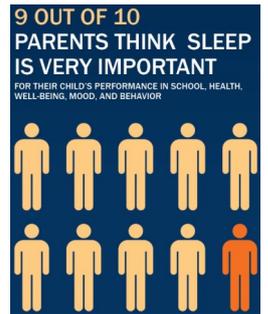
Good sleep is important for your child's physical and mental well-being

Your child's bedroom should ideally be quiet, dark and tidy.

It should be well ventilated and kept at a temperature of about 16 to 20C.

Thick curtains and/or black-out blinds also help to keep the room darker for longer, especially in the summer months.

Daytime sleepiness and behaviour problems may signal poor sleep or a sleep problem.



Know how much sleep your child needs

These are the approximate hours of sleep needed by children of different ages (as recommended by the NHS):

2 years	daytime: 1 hour 30 minutes night time: 11 hours 30 minutes
3 years	daytime: 0-45 minutes night time: 11 hours 30 minutes to 12 hours
4 years	night time: 11 hours 30 minutes

ENFORCING RULES

Helps children
get more sleep



**1.1 HRS
MORE SLEEP**
WHEN CHILDREN HAVE RULES
ABOUT BEDTIME

Relaxation tips to help sleep

A relaxing bedtime routine is one important way to help your child to get a good night's sleep.

Doing the same relaxing things in the same order and at the same time each night helps to promote good sleep:

- A warm (not hot) bath will help your child relax and get ready for sleep
- Keeping lights dim encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone, melatonin
- Once they're in bed, encourage your child to read quietly or listen to some relaxing music, or read a story together

Things to avoid at bedtime

Tablets, smartphones, TVs and other electronic gadgets can affect how easily children get to sleep.

Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone; this will also prevent them from using gadgets if they wake up in the night.

Encourage your child to stop using screens an hour before bedtime.

REMEMBER:
Setting rules around
electronics use in the
bedroom is an integral
part of developing
healthy sleep routines
for your children.

Common sleep problems

Many toddlers experience sleep problems including resisting going to bed and night time awakenings. Night time fears and nightmares are also common. During pre-school years, children's imagination develops further and night time fears, nightmares, sleep walking and sleep terrors peak at this time.

Many factors can lead to sleep problems:

- toddlers' drive for independence
- an increase in their motor, cognitive and social abilities
- their ability to get out of bed
- separation anxiety
- the need for autonomy
- the development of the child's imagination



Nightmares and night terrors

Nightmares and night terrors are both scary and can cause sleep disturbances, but they are not the same thing.

Nightmares, or dreams with explicit, unsettling content, occur most often during REM sleep, when the brain is most prone to vivid dreaming. They often occur later at night or early-morning hours. Nightmares are vividly recalled **and** often children will want to talk about the bad dream and have their parent reassure them that everything is ok.

On the other hand, a child experiencing a night terror may shout, sleepwalk, or appear scared for several minutes before relaxing back into sleep. Later, the child will only have a vague recall of the dream. Although it can be distressing to witness, night terrors aren't harmful and chances are the sleeper won't even remember it in the morning. Night terrors are more common in children, especially they're between the ages of four and eight. Night terrors typically go away on their own as a child gets older. Nightmares, meanwhile, can affect any age.



Whether the concern is night terrors or nightmares, if frightening dreams are keeping your child awake at night for several nights (or weeks) in a row, consider talking with your doctor or health visitor. Sleep disruptions, whether you remember them or not, can negatively affect daytime energy levels, leading to a neg-

Top tips to support sleep problems



Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule which allows them to have enough sleep before they need to get up for nursery.

Set limits that are consistent, clearly communicated and enforced (**you** are the adult and **you** know what is best for your child). If your child regularly gets out of bed, silently walk them back, tuck them in and leave. You want these interactions to be as boring as possible—no threats, no bargaining, no discussion—which relatively quickly discourages your child from the 'jack-in-the-box' behaviour.

Make sure the relaxing bedtime routine ends in the room where they will sleep (cool, quiet and dark with no gadgets).

Encourage the use of a security object such as a blanket or cuddly toy.

Get help with sleep problems

If you've tried all the tips but your child keeps having problems getting to sleep or sleeping through the night, you may feel you want more support.

See your doctor or health visitor in the first place who may be able to offer further advice or may refer you to a paediatrician.