

# Why Sleep is So Important for Your Kids

As summer continues on, many families find themselves busier than ever, with activities and plans filling up the weeks. But without the structure of the school year, you might find yourselves not as strict about bedtimes or ensuring that your kids get enough sleep..

For their short term and long term health, getting enough sleep is essential for kids. For children 3 to 5 years, it is recommended they sleep 10 to 12 hours; for ages 6 to 12, they should get 10 to 11 hours; 13 to 18 year-olds should sleep around 8 to 9 hours a day.

So why is getting enough sleep important, and why should it be made a priority, no matter what time of the year it is?

In the short term, sleep has a profound impact on cognitive function, mood, and decision making. Well rested kids will perform better in their daily activities and will respond more resiliently to whatever obstacles come their way.



In the longer term, good sleep is a key component in your child's growth and development. Your child's body produces HGH and other necessary hormones, which help your child grow strong and healthy. Furthermore, sleep is essential for memory consolidation. A lack of sleep will impair your child's development both physically and mentally.

Well rested children also benefit from an improved immune system. Tired kids are more likely to catch whatever virus is circulating amongst their peers, and are worse equipped to fend off illness if they are infected.

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Given the numerous benefits of sleep, it is important to implement some rules to best facilitate quality rest time.

As much as possible, put your kids to bed at the same time each night. Routine is key. Erratic sleep schedules can wreak havoc on your child's circadian rhythm, which can make falling asleep much more difficult.

Avoid screens before bedtime. Have your children stop using electronics half an hour or more before bedtime. Blue light from most devices is disruptive to sleep and many shows/games also leave your kids too wired to fall asleep. Encourage them to read or listen to a book instead, or play with old fashioned toys.

Different things work for different kids; find what works for your family, and stick to it as much as possible! And remember, sleep for you as a parent is just as important.

Sleep up!

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*Originally posted on the Now What? Blog on 7.2.21 The Now What? Blog served for nearly 7 years to*

- 1. Normalize parents seeking support and help as a manner of child abuse prevention*
- 2. Engage community in how they can work to prevent child abuse*
- 3. Work to build resiliency in families through promotion of the 5 protective factors*

*Maybe you coach a baseball team or you help care for the neighbor kids from time to time. You are investing in the safety and security of the children in our community. Because it truly does take a village to raise our children, we want to offer the tools needed to bring awareness and education to preventing child abuse.*

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