

A woman with blonde hair is sitting on the edge of a bed, reading a book to a young child who is lying in bed. The room is dimly lit, suggesting it's nighttime. There are some drawings on the wall behind the child.

DECEMBER 12, 2024

# KNOW! TO CREATE HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

A good night's sleep is essential for young people's growth, development, and overall well-being. However, in today's busy world, it can be challenging to prioritize healthy sleep habits. In fact, the CDC reports that **over 75% of high school students** don't get enough sleep on school nights.

Small changes can make a big difference in sleep quality for young people. The following tips are designed to help parents and caregivers support their children in building healthy sleep habits. Whether it's maintaining a consistent schedule, crafting a calming sleep environment, or addressing common challenges, these strategies provide practical guidance for better rest.

## 1. STICK TO A REGULAR SLEEP SCHEDULE (YES, EVEN ON WEEKENDS!)

Consistency is key when it comes to a healthy sleep routine. Young people should try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day – even on the weekends! It's okay to enjoy a little flexibility, but keeping young people's weekend sleep schedule within two hours of their weekday times helps their bodies stay in sync. A regular routine supports children and teenagers' natural sleep cycles and ensures they get the rest they need.<sup>1,2</sup>

## 2. STEP AWAY FROM SCREENS BEFORE BED

It can be tough to put down our devices, but doing so is one of the best ways to improve sleep quality—not just for kids, but for everyone! The blue light from screens stimulates the brain and can make it harder to wind down. Plus, it's easy to lose track of time scrolling on social media.

To help, encourage young people to finish any screen-based homework before dinner whenever possible. Set a "screen-time curfew" by turning off all electronics—like phones, tablets, computers, and TVs—at least 60 minutes before bed. Keeping bedrooms device-free by charging phones and tablets outside the room can also make a big difference.

Don't forget to lead by example. Sticking to these habits yourself shows kids what a healthy relationship with technology looks like.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

### 3. PRIORITIZE A RELAXING NIGHTTIME ROUTINE

A calming bedtime routine is a great way to wind down and prepare for restful sleep. Sit down with your child to create a bedtime routine together – this helps them take ownership of the process. Encourage your child to explore activities that help them relax.

For elementary-aged children, a good routine might include a warm bath, reading a favorite story, or some quiet cuddle time with a parent. For older kids and teens, it might look like logging off social media, showering, and listening to music. What's important is finding what works best to create a peaceful transition to sleep and maintaining that routine.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### 4. CREATE A SLEEP-FRIENDLY SPACE

Help your child turn their room into a cozy, relaxing space for sleep. A good sleep environment is usually quiet and dark, but you can personalize it to your child's needs. Consider options like earplugs, a fan, a white noise machine, a night light, and room-darkening curtains. Take time to ask your child what helps them feel relaxed in their room, and work together to create that environment. Remember, the bed should be reserved for sleeping, so encourage your child to use other areas in the home for eating, watching TV, and doing homework.<sup>1,2,4</sup>

### 5. DON'T OVERLOAD THE SCHEDULE

Being active and engaged during the day is great for young people, but a packed schedule right up until bedtime can prevent a good night's sleep.

For elementary-aged kids and pre-teens, make sure their day includes time for homework and winding down before bed. For teens with busier schedules – like part-time jobs, more homework, or after-school activities, bedtime routines might need a little flexibility. It's okay if they're busier and go to bed later occasionally, but encourage them to maintain their bedtime routine. Shifting straight from a high-energy activity to sleep can be a challenge, so finding time to relax is key.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### 6. AVOID RELYING ON SLEEP AIDS

When your child has trouble sleeping, it might be tempting to turn to a nightly sleep aid, like melatonin. However, recent studies show that the actual melatonin content in over-the-counter products can vary widely – sometimes much more or less than the label states. These products may also contain unlisted chemicals. While short-term use of melatonin is generally safe, relying on sleep aids over time could have harmful effects on a young person's growth and development. More research is needed to fully understand the risks for children.

The good news? Most kids don't need sleep aids to get the rest they need. Consistently following the sleep tips above can make a big difference, though it might take a few weeks to see results. If your child continues to struggle with sleep, reach out to your doctor before introducing any sleep aids. They can help identify underlying issues and suggest safe solutions.<sup>4,5</sup>

### RESOURCES

[Sleep Hygiene-Teen Handout | CHOC Children's](#)

[Sleep tips: How to help your teen get a good night's sleep](#)

[Sleep-Tips-for-Teens.pdf](#)

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