

**Sleep Tips**

**Good sleep is important for your child's physical and mental wellbeing**

**How much sleep do children need?**

Below are the approximate hours of sleep needed by children of different ages, as recommended by the Millpond Children's Sleep Clinic:

**2 years**

daytime: 1 hour 30 minutes

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes

**3 years**

daytime: 0 to 45 minutes

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes to 12 hours

**4 years**

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes

**5 years**

night-time: 11 hours

**Bedtime routine**

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

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

* A warm (not hot) bath will help your child relax and get ready for sleep.
* Keep lights dim, this encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone, melatonin.
* Once they're in bed, read a story together
* Try listening to some relaxing music

**Avoid screens in the bedroom**

* Tablets, smartphones, TVs and other electronic gadgets can affect how easily children get to sleep.
* Older children may also stay up late or even wake in the middle of the night to use social media.
* Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone, and get them to charge their phones in another room.
* Encourage your child to stop using screens or watching TV an hour before bedtime.

**Your child's bedroom**

* Your child's bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet and tidy.
* It should be well ventilated and kept at a temperature of about 18 to 24C.
* Fit some thick curtains to block out any daylight.
* If there's noise outside, consider investing in double glazing or, for a cheaper option, offer your child earplugs.

## **More information and support**

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

You can speak to your GP or health visitor to begin with.

They may refer you to a child psychologist or another expert.

**You could suggest your child tries this**[**relaxing breathing exercise**](https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/ways-relieve-stress.aspx)**before bed**

This calming breathing technique for stress, anxiety and panic takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere.

Your child will get the most benefit if they do it regularly, as part of their daily routine.

Ask your child to:

* Make themselves as comfortable as they can, loosening any clothes that restrict breathing
* Lie down, placing their arms a little bit away from their sides, with the palms up. Let their legs be straight, or bend their knees so their feet are flat on the floor
* Place their feet roughly hip-width apart
* Let their breath flow as deep down into their belly as is comfortable, without forcing it
* Try breathing in through their nose and out through their mouth
* Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from one to five
* Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from one to five again, if they find this helpful.
* Keep doing this for three to five minutes.



Information in this leaflet is taken from:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness