



Sleeping Tip Sheet for Parents

General Sleep Tips

- Sleep is important to your child's health. Getting enough sleep creates healthy bodies and brains
- Experts recommend that children ages 3-5 years get 10-13 hours of sleep, children ages 6-12 years get 9-12 hours of sleep, and teenagers ages 13-18 years get 8-10 hours of sleep
- Create a sleep friendly space that includes a comfortable mattress, the right temperature (we sleep better in cooler rooms), and limited light (we sleep better in darker rooms)
- Create a bedtime routine that your child follows each night (bath-time, story-time, goodnight song). Routines "tell" your child's body and brain that it is time to get ready to go to sleep, making it easier for them to fall asleep

- Have a set time that your child goes to bed and wakes up. This can be hard at first but eventually your child's brain and body will adjust to the new schedule. For older children and teens avoid regular napping
- Encourage your child to only use their bed for sleeping. Try to avoid having your child do homework, play, or any other activities in their bed. Learning that beds are only for sleeping will help them fall asleep quicker
- Limit screen time. Try to have no screen time one hour before



bedtime. Screen time (tv, phones, videogames) makes it harder for your child's brain to get into "sleep mode"

Anxious Sleepers

Some children experience anxiety before going to bed or sleeping alone. If your child is scared about sleeping alone or anxious before bed, here are some ideas that may help:

- Create a worry jar where your child writes down all their worries and puts them in the jar. Tell your child that they are going to say goodbye to their worries before bed by putting their jar outside their bedroom
- Leave something of yours with your child or by their bedside. Tell them that you will be watching over them all night
- Tell them how you will visit each other in your dreams. Have your child tell you what you will do together in his or her dreams

Helpful Links

- Nighttime separation anxiety:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXuj6-9hZCM>
- Childhood nightmares:
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/coping-with-nightmares/>
- Sleep diary:
<http://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/SleepDiary.pdf>