

Ed Extras: Pre-K

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Good Night, Sleep Tight: Preschoolers and Sleep

Parents of young kids know how precious sleep can be. It's important to remember that a lack of sleep can impact your preschooler's behavior and ability to have a good day at preschool. Grumpiness, low energy, and extremes in behavior could all be signs that your child needs more sleep.

While experts agree about the value of sleep, they also recognize that not all kids need the exact same amount. In general though, one to three year olds need between 12-14 hours of sleep per day. Most kids this age take one long nap and go to bed between 7 and 9 p.m. Kids ages three to six years old typically need between 10-12 hours of sleep per day.

To help your child understand the difference between a body at rest and a body at play, try this simple experiment:

- When your child is calm and resting, help him count his pulse during a one-minute interval.
- Write down the number of beats counted.
- Then have your child get up and do an active movement for several minutes. Try jumping jacks, running, or hopping up and down.
- Once again, help your child count his pulse during a one-minute interval.
- Compare the rate of your child's pulse when resting to when active.

At the end of the day, help your child make observations about what happens when she gets tired. When it draws close to bedtime, ask your child how she feels. What are the signs her body gives that tell her that it is time to rest? (yawning, drooping eyelids, or a "heavy" head).

Take that sleepy-time opportunity to cuddle up with some good books for story time. Reading stories before bedtime makes a good transition between active play and rest time and should be a part of the bedtime routine. Those special, quiet moments with books will become special memories for you and your child.

For story suggestions, take a look at these booklists:

Ten Bedtime Stories

www.ReadingRockets.org/articles/books/c353

Sleepytime Books

www.ReadingRockets.org/articles/books/c354

