



Sleep and Rest Routine

Child's Name _____ DOB _____

Date of completing the form _____

Form completed by _____

Current sleep practices / routine at home:

Yes, my child sleeps during the day at home

Frequency: (please circle) twice a day once a day other _____

My child has a rest period at home, for how long _____

No, my child does not sleep at home This is a parent decision OR child led

When did your child finish day sleeps _____

Other _____

Sleep practice / routine you would like considered at the centre

(note the needs of all the children is paramount and we are a child focussed service):

Yes, I want my child to sleep through the day

Please give further details regarding times and frequency for reference – we will endeavour to follow this however we cannot guarantee these will be the exact times your child will sleep in care.

For children who sleep – “Patting”

Yes, I am happy for my child to be patted off to sleep. (includes rocking, nursing, back rubbing)

No, I do not want my child actively patted off to sleep.

I do not want my child to sleep through the day, however I am happy to let them sleep if they fall asleep. *(Child led sleeping)*

No, I do not want my child to sleep at all. This is a parent decision OR child led

If possible, please explain – as a service we believe children fall asleep because they are tired and need the rest, our child focussed preference is to allow a child to sleep as their bodies need.

At all times changes can be made to this request. For ongoing changes complete a new form, or for one off changes please speak to the Educators in your child's room. All rooms have a sleep and rest routine. Please speak to room staff regarding theirs.

Educator acknowledgement _____

POLICY 2.42 Sleep and Rest– in part

Rationale and Policy Considerations

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. Our objective is to meet these needs by providing a comfortable, relaxing and safe space to enable their bodies to rest. This environment will also be well supervised ensuring all children feel secure and safe at our service.

Policy Statement

Our Service will ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their individual needs. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) for infants will be minimised by following practices and guidelines set out by health authorities.

If a family's beliefs and requests are against current recommended evidence-based guidelines, our Service will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices.

Our Service will only approve an alternative practice if the Service is provided with written advice from, and the contact details of a registered medical practitioner accompanied by a risk assessment and risk minimisation plan for individual children. We have a duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard. In meeting the Service's duty of care, it is a requirement that all Educators implement and adhere to this policy to ensure we respect and cater for each child's specific needs.

Strategies for Policy implementation

Our Service defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness, or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep. Considering the busy and energetic nature of children's day, we feel that it is important for children to participate in a quiet/rest period during the day in order to rest, relax, and recharge their body. Effective rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in an early childhood environment.

Our Service will consult with families about their child's individual needs, ensuring all parties are aware of the different values, cultural, and parenting beliefs and practices, or opinions associated with sleep requirements.

Educators will:

- Communicate with families about their child's sleeping or rest times and the Service policy regarding sleep and rest times.
- Respect family preferences regarding sleep and rest and consider these daily while ensuring children feel safe and secure in the environment. Conversations with families may be necessary to remind families that children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily for families.
- Ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that children who **do not** wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, whilst those children who **do** wish to sleep are allowed to do so, without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest. It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided.
- Consider a vast range of strategies to meet children's individual sleep and rest needs.
- Respond to children's individual cues for sleep (yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying etc).
- Acknowledge children's emotions, feelings and fears in regard to sleep/rest time.
- Develop positive relationships with children to assist in settling children confidently when sleeping and resting.

Ratified by Management – full Policy available upon request

[How much sleep does your baby or toddler actually need?](#)

Dr Sam Hay urges parents to stop stressing about their child's sleep.

Dr Sam Hay

Dr Sam Hay

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After three kids, and countless conversations with mums and dads, I'm beginning to wonder who needs sleep more in those first few years of parenthood. Them, or us?

Why - because I observe the full spectrum. From kids who are insomniac demons, through to the most angelic little cherubs. And at the end of the day, when they're all grown up, there's no way of telling them apart: because they pretty much all end up ok.

But there's little solitude in that when your eyes are hanging out of your head after ten sleepless nights in a row!

What is a healthy sleep?

Sleep is literally one of the most essential aspects of life, especially for a growing baby. It's essential for development, growth, learning, and immunity. There is a massive - MASSIVE - difference in sleep amounts and patterns between kids, which often makes it hard distinguishing the 'normal' from the 'not-normal'.

Sleep basically has two phases: REM and non-REM, each making a 'sleep cycle'. Babies start off with really short sleep cycles and with more REM sleep. As they get older, the cycle lengthens, and the REM component shortens: to be about the same as adults from the age of six.

How will you know if kids don't get enough sleep?

We've all been there as adults, and use big words to describe our lack of sleep such as irritable, grumpy, distractible, poorly motivated, foggy, and tired. Kids are just the same. They could also be hyperactive, restless, off their food, act out, behave badly, or perform poorly at school. Babies get grizzly and unsettled.

That's a very wide range of symptoms - which is part of the challenge when it comes to assessing and managing kids and their sleep.

Not enough healthy sleep is linked to countless medical issues, most notably poor growth, excessive weight gain, mental health issues, and poor school performance.

How much sleep does a child need?

Newborns

In the first few weeks, newborns typically spend 16-18 hours asleep, made up of numerous short naps. (And yes I heard you all scoff - we'd swear the rest of the day was spent crying!). Fluctuations and a wide variety of sleep cycles and patterns are entirely normal for newborns, which is why you won't hear of firm guidelines or schedules.

Each newborn classically has a period of the day when they are more unsettled, taking sleep in ridiculously short bursts, and it doesn't matter what we do: they just don't want to be calm. This 'witching hour' is entirely normal, usually occurs in the evening, but can happen any time of the day.

From around the age of two months many parents find kids are starting to develop a bit of a routine of feeding, daytime naps, and nighttime sleep.

Issues with delayed development, poor growth, parental fatigue or stress, or baby distress would all warrant a team-based support from a medical team of general practitioners, paediatricians, early-childhood nurses, Parenting/Family Care Centres, and other allied health professionals. Please reach out if you're struggling.

Premature babies

It's not uncommon for premature bubs to need even more sleep, up to 20-21 hours a day, with lighter and less consistent sleep overall. This progressively resembles full-term infant patterns by 12 months in most.

Infants

Infants get a large proportion of the total sleep from naps through the day, and will certainly have some periods of wakefulness and play.

Napping

Napping is incredibly beneficial for our kids' development. Researchers have discovered that napping is central to consolidating memories, which further supports brain development and learning.

In the first two months for bub, each sleep will be varied: from 30 minutes to four hours - day or night.

From two months, a baby's circadian rhythm starts to establish, with progressively longer sleep periods, and more sleep at night. But there's no set schedule or age where sleep becomes set in stone, it just gradually adjusts as the weeks and months progress.

From around two months to 12 months naps typically reduce from 3-4 to 2 each daytime period. Sometime around 18 months a morning nap will drop off your child's busy schedule, with one daytime nap often needed out to the age of five.

It's not considered normal for kids over the age of five to need consistent long naps every day. But a nap here or there, perhaps after a busy week of school or a long weekend with the grandparents is entirely normal - mum and dad do it occasionally!

How much sleep does a child need?

| Age range | Recommended total hours of sleep every day (24hours) |
|------------------------|--|
| Newborn 0-3 months | 14-17 hours (including naps) |
| Infant 4-12 months | 12-16 hours (including naps) |
| Toddler 1-2 years | 11-14 hours (including naps) |
| Pre-school 3-5 years | 10-13 hours (including naps) |
| School aged 6-12 years | 9-12 hours (including naps) |

Sleeping through the night

Six months. By six months MY CHILD MUST BE SLEEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT!"

This expectation causes significant stress for parents, particularly around a fear of poor future development if kids fail to sleep for long periods at night at a younger age.

Research tells us that this expectation is not the norm: 1 in 3 kids aged 6-12 months are not sleeping 6+ hours through the night. The same research also found that whilst parents stress over the delay in reaching this milestone, it doesn't have any effect on their future development.

Total sleep time is the most important factor for fostering good growth and development, not lengthy nighttime sleeps, or if your bub starts 'sleeping through' from a young age. The good news for parents is the progressive improvement with time - which was important for me to remember when my youngest was still waking twice every night at the age of 18 months....

Any concerns around nighttime sleeping should be discussed with your medical team.

Does breastfeeding affect sleep for bubs?

This is truly a hot and contentious topic. Some studies suggest breastfeeding leads to bubs waking more often at night; whilst many other studies state there is little difference between breast and formula-fed bubs and their sleep.

Some research suggests breastfed bubs may be better sleepers in their pre-school years - but this needs deeper investigation of cause-and-effect.

Sleep tips

There are 7452 tips, tricks and guides out there for getting your kids to sleep. But for me, constant reassurance is key, because the most important thing to remember is that if growth and development are both on track, then things are likely to be entirely normal.

Your child's bedroom should be quiet, dark and comfortable.

Establish a consistent bedtime routine. By all means have a handful of steps in there, but be careful: the more you throw in, the more you need to undo as they get older!

Establish a regular sleep pattern. Bubs, infants, and young kids can't tell the time. But their body does develop a circadian rhythm. Support this as early as possible with a good routine and pattern - but don't be wedded to the clock.

Get kids active and exercising in daylight in the morning and through the day.

Limit access to electronic devices - an absolute given.

Some parents enjoy some quiet time to help their children drift off to sleep. Image: iStock

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Self-settling

Some kids get it early, for some it takes years. But our ability to nod off each night stems from our capacity to settle ourselves to sleep. Babies must learn to get themselves to sleep on their own at the beginning of the night in order to foster better self-soothing skills when they wake through the night. Of course a baby or infant gets freaked out when they wake up - it's normal, but they need to learn how to overcome this fear.

If your kids are waking in the night, give them as little attention and stimulation as you can - keep them in bed with as little fuss as possible. Then progressively wait longer till you go back in and repeat. It's a tough, emotionally draining, and exhausting process, but it's important to stick at it. It's also a process with numerous strategies, that are best tailored to each family with the support of trained allied health sleep experts.

When should you go to the doctor?

Sure, there is a wide spectrum of normal, but sometimes being reassured your bub is normal will be all you need. Plus, your team of experts know many little things they can pass on that can make a difference.

If there are growth or development issues along with sleep challenges, then you definitely need a check-up with your GP, who may recommend tests or referrals to a paediatrician, sleep expert, or a program that offers day or overnight support programs.

Originally published as How much sleep does your baby or toddler actually need?