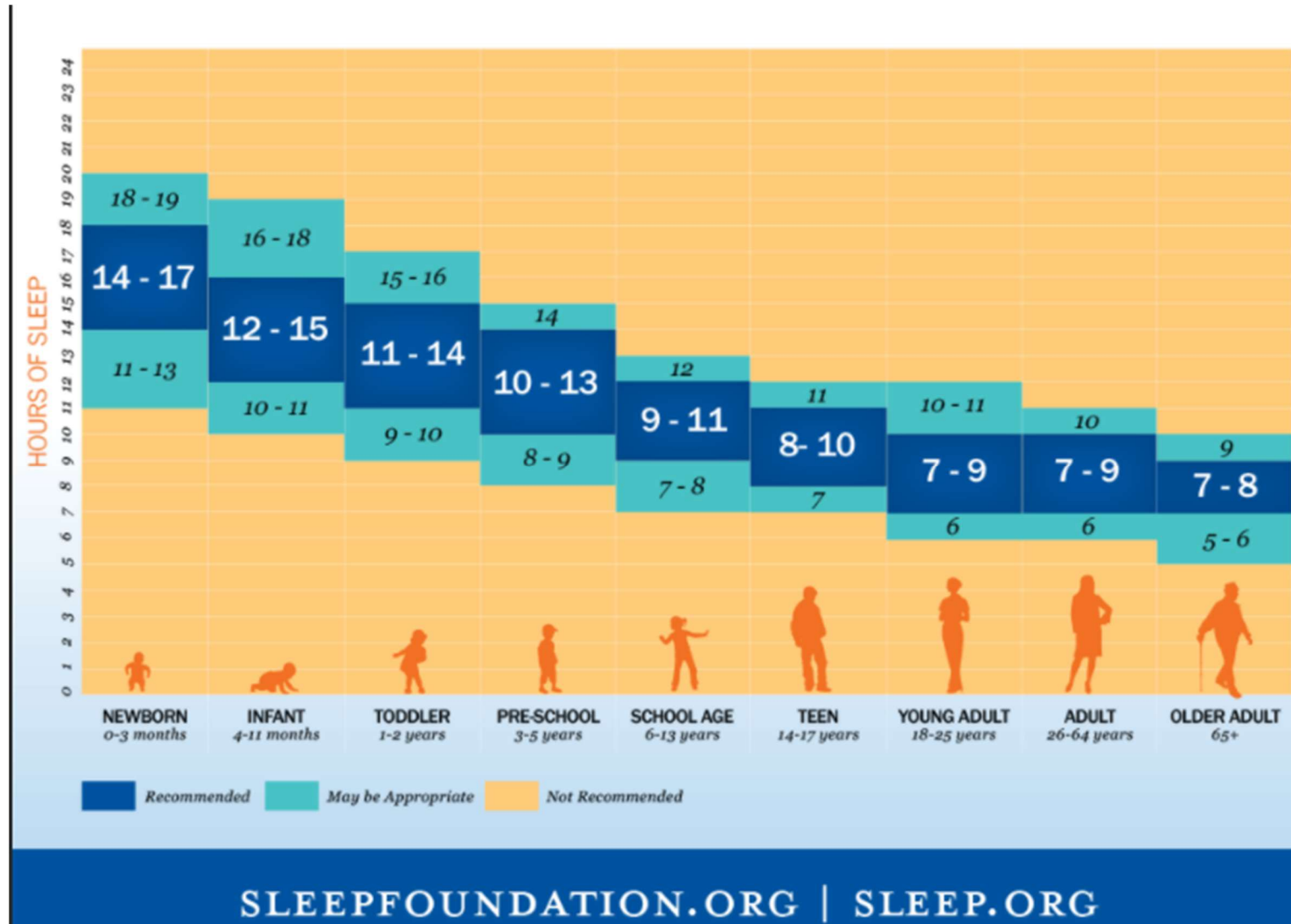


Sleep Information

Children and Young People

Compiled by the Community Paediatric
Medical Service

How much sleep does my child or young person need?



How much sleep does my child or young person need?

The amount of sleep a young person needs depends on the individual and certain factors, such as the age of the young person. Below are some general guidelines:

Age (years)	Hours of sleep required	Bed time	Wake up time	Additional comments
1 – 3	12 – 14	7pm to 9pm	6am to 8am	Most children at this age will have a nap during the day lasting 1-3 ½ hours.
3 – 6	10 – 12	7pm to 9pm	6am to 8am	Naps are becoming shorter at 3 years old and stopping by 4 years old.
7 – 12	10 – 11	7:30pm to 10pm	7am to 8am (for school)	There is variation in bed times at this age. This is due to social, school and family activities. The average length of sleep for this age group is 9 hours.
12 – 18	8 – 9	10pm or later	7am to 8am (for school)	Bed time is getting later. Social pressures often conspire against teenagers getting the appropriate amount of sleep.

Sleep Hygiene Advice

ROUTINE

- Have a consistent bed time routine to ensure children know what to expect and when. Chose a bed time and stick to it.
- If the child takes an hour to fall asleep, you may want to consider changing the bed time to 30 minutes later.
- Consider using a visual scheduler for your child to follow. Keep your voice calm, avoid confrontation and any bright lighting.

Example of routine

- Turn off TV/devices and have a 'calm down time' (colouring, drawing, play-dough, lego)
- Have a snack and a drink (avoid caffeine)
- Up to the bathroom for a bath/wash/ toilet/ teeth
- Bedroom for story/ massage/music/meditation

OUR DAILY ROUTINE



Bathroom:

- Potty
- Wash hands & face
- Brush teeth
- Comb hair
- Sunscreen



Make bed



Get dressed



Put dirty Pjs in hamper



Eat breakfast



Take vitamins



Goodbye hugs



Pick up toys & tidy room



Pack backpack



Put on Pjs



Put dirty clothes in hamper



Bathroom:

- Tub time
- Potty
- Wash hands & face
- Brush teeth



Read for **15** minutes



Lights out

- Try using a visual timetable to support children's understanding of the routine



You can find printable examples of these over the internet.

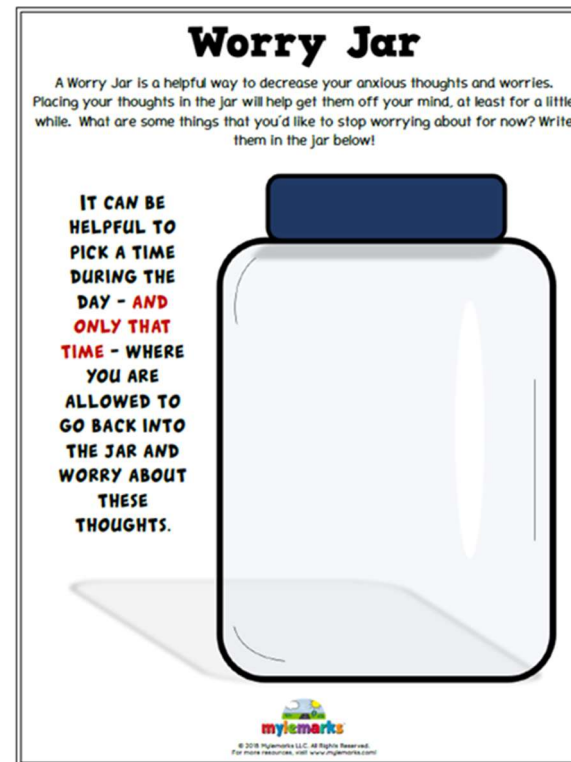
- Some transitions can cause conflict – try using sand timers or time trackers or Alexa to help the children understand how long they have left watching TV or sitting in the bath etc. before moving to the next step of the routine



- Ensure children go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, including weekends and holidays
- Try to ensure exposure to natural light in the mornings – open the curtains, or get outside in the garden for 15 minutes or use a light box therapy source (10.000LUX)



- Encourage the use of comforters associated with bed time routine – something that the child can easily access on their own if they do wake up in the night (soft toy/blanket)
- Try not to discuss worries and anxieties close to bed time – find a time earlier in the evening where children can talk about their feelings



ENVIRONMENT/SENSORY

- Encourage children to settle themselves to sleep – avoiding props such as reading until they fall asleep, using the TV as a background noise etc.
- Try to ensure the environment stays the same – if the child falls asleep with the TV on and the door open, they will expect this when they wake up in the night during normal night wakenings.

Bedroom



- Try to ensure bedroom is dark

- If the child is scared of the dark, use a nightlight. It is preferable to use an **orange or red lightbulb** as this stimulates natural production of melatonin.



- Try to ensure the bedroom is cool – between 16-20°C (18°C is ideal)



- Make sure your child's feet are warm before falling asleep (wear socks/slippers 1hr before bed)
- Household **noise** should be kept to a minimum.
- Consider different **smells** that the young person might be sensitive to (detergent used to wash bedlinen, smell of food coming from the kitchen, strongly scented candles/air fresheners being used in the house). Use of lavender oil for bath or massaging might have a calming effect.
- Touch: materials, labels, mattress (too soft/too hard?), long/short PJ etc.

- Bedroom and beds are for *SLEEPING* ...zzzz



- Beds should not be used for eating, homework, watching TV, punishment



- For older children who want a bit of privacy – if possible – have a separate area within the bedroom for doing homework, watching TV, Gaming



- Make sure the bedroom is not overstimulating

Avoid:

- Glowing alarm clocks



Having electronics in the room



- Tablets, computers, screens, other electronics that can emit light or noise
- Mobile phones flashing with notifications and vibrating with messages – these can be disruptive and distracting

- Lots of stimulating toys in the bedroom – if younger children are getting out of bed to play with toys - try putting the toys in a container and lifting them into another room at night time



- For children or young people who are reluctant to relinquish their phones/tablets – suggest an electronics box for family time and bedtime.



- We would advise a period of wind down 45-60 minutes before bedtime where there is no access to electronic screens. Start small, we acknowledge this is not always easy, but agree with the young person on a reasonable time to start with (15 minutes for example) and build it up. Praise the child and encourage him/her further!
- For older children who resist giving up their phone in the bedroom – suggest leaving the box just outside their door – reassuring them that it will not be taken away.

ELECTRONICS AND GAMING

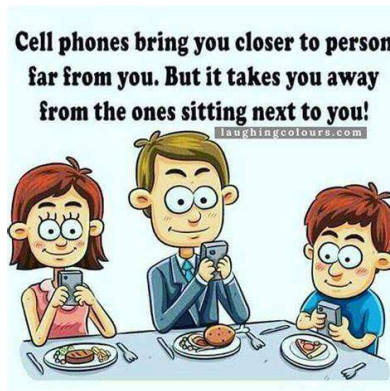
Parents are encouraged to take control
Make use of any Wi-Fi controls and have a shut off time.



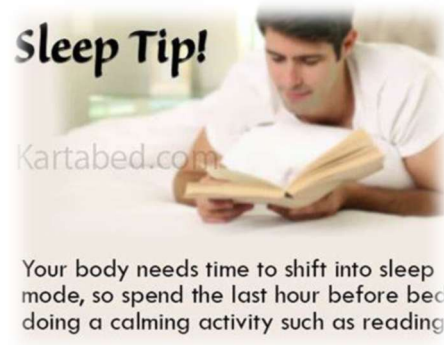
- Have a charging station downstairs or in the livingroom to discourage children to take their devices to bed



- Lead by example – if parents are constantly on their devices, children will see this as an acceptable behaviour



- Encourage other activities such as reading a book, playing with lego, fine motor skills activities or relaxing activities before bed or playing outside, playing with friends.



★ THINGS TO DO TONIGHT



Take a really **deep** breath. Go down your body, focusing on **relaxing** each muscle.



Create a comfortable and **relaxing** environment for yourself.



If you have a lot on your mind try **journaling** to calm your thoughts.



You made it another day. **Be proud** of yourself.



Go through your night time **routine** and do the things that **soothe** you.



Let go of what's **bothering** you. Take a deep breath and let go.

Blessing Manifesting

- Some children might find the bath overly stimulating (highly enjoyable) so you may wish to consider this activity for earlier in the day. Alternatively, you could consider a gentle hand or foot massage before bed.
- Use different apps for stories, relaxation, meditation (e.g. Insight Timer is a great one)
- Remember to put the relaxation activity into the bedtime routine.

DIET

Try to ensure children are not too full – avoid large meals before bed

Try to ensure that children are not hungry – offering a small snack for supper can be helpful.

- Any last meals should be undertaken before the scheduled wind- down time. Caffeine, sugar (and nicotine and alcohol) should be avoided as these are stimulants and can interfere with sleep.



BLACK TEA
240 ML



26 - 50 MG

WHITE TEA
240 ML



12 - 36 MG

ICED TEA
330 ML



10 - 50 MG

GREEN TEA
240 ML



28 - 36 MG

DARK CHOCOLATE
30 G



20 - 120 MG

CHOCOLATE BAR
30 G



5 - 36 MG

MILK CHOCOLATE
30 G



1 - 15 MG

HOT CHOCOLATE
150 ML

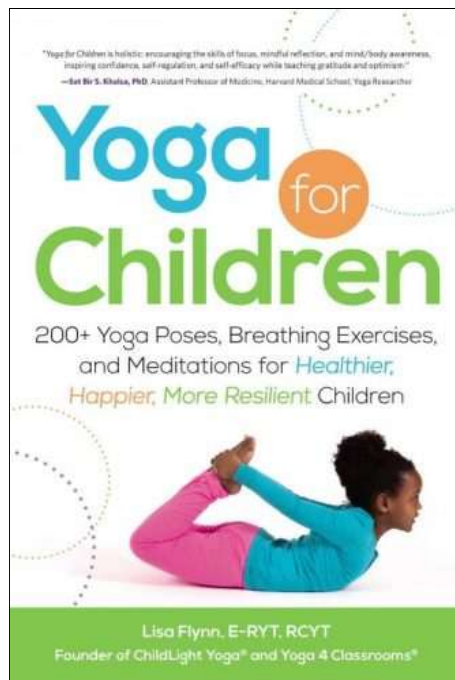


2 - 7 MG

EXERCISE

Exercise is important but should be avoided too close to bedtime.

Make sure the time for exercise is early in the day as stimulating exercise close to bed could make it more difficult to fall asleep. Be sure that all hard or tiring activities end 2 or 3 hours before bed.



SOCIAL STORIES

Use language such as “close your eyes”, “see you in the morning” rather than “go to sleep” as this can be a difficult concept to understand. Social stories could also be used to reassure your child that they are safe when sleeping or in bed alone. Website for examples of social stories: www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com/main/library_social_stories.html

COMMON PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Children who insist on parents' presence - Graded withdrawal:

1. Lie next to child on bed for three nights
2. Lie on mattress next to bed for three nights
3. Move mattress closer to door every three nights
4. Sit on chair in bedroom at door with door open for three nights
5. Sit outside door whilst still visible to child for three nights
6. Sit outside door not visible to child for three nights
7. Sit outside room with door closed for three nights.

For night wakening - Scheduled awakening:

1. From sleep diary, see when child wakes up during the night
2. Set alarm clock for 30 minutes before this
3. Wake child and allow to fall back to sleep
4. If child doesn't fall back to sleep, try waking 45 minutes before on the next night and experiment until you find the best time.

TOP TIPS

1. Be consistent. Your child will learn most quickly if you behave in the same way every time e.g. resettle them back to sleep in the same way when they wake or have the same bedtime routine every night.
2. If possible, try to give rewards at the time when the behaviour occurs, otherwise the child will not know what they are being rewarded for.
3. Try to be firm. Sound as if you believe that your child can settle to sleep alone and they will know that you 'mean business'.

RESOURCES:

Useful stories:

Joyce Dunbar (2006) - Tell me something happy before I go to sleep, WHSmith

Michael Foreman (2007) – Dad! I can't sleep, Andersen Press Ltd

Dawn Huebner (2008) - What to do when you dread your bed: A kid's Guide to overcoming Problems with sleep

Capucine Mazille (2007) – How will I ever sleep in this bed?

Jane Simmons (2000) – Go to sleep Daisy, O'Brien's Press Ltd

For parents and older children: Matthew Walker - Why we sleep: The new Science of sleep and dreams.

Practical resources:

<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/> - Cerebra Offers 1:1 personalised support

<https://cerebra.org.uk/download/sleep-a-guide-for-parents/>

<https://cerebra.org.uk/download/sleep-cards/>

www.dunelm-mill.com – provide blackout blinds in various sizes.

www.magicblackoutblind.co.uk – provide blackout blind sheets (easy to tear off and can be cut to fit most standard window sizes with 10 sheets on a roll)

www.rompa.com and www.specialistdirect.com – provide specialist products for young person with additional support needs

www.relaxkids.com – provide a range of relaxation products for sleep specifically for young people

www.fledings.org.uk – provide a range of equipment for people with additional support needs

www.gro.co.uk – provide products such as the Gro-clock and the Gro Anywhere Blind

Podcast: The content of this podcast may be helpful for any child with sleep problems – whether on the autistic spectrum or not.

Exploring ASD with the Northern Trust – Good Sleep and How to Get it

[Exploring ASD with the Northern Trust: Good sleep and how to get it on Apple Podcasts](#)

Web resources:

<https://www.sleepscotland.org/>

<https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/fact-sheets/childrens-resources.html>

<https://cerebra.org.uk/research/understanding-and-reducing-sleep-disorders-in-children-with-development-delay/>

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sleep/>

<https://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/our-services/hospital/sleep-medicine-department/how-to-sleep-well-for-teenagers.aspx>

(Acknowledgement: With special thanks to NHSCT Paediatric ASD service – extracts from their sleep information booklet are included in this resource)

Our Vision

**We provide compassionate care
with our community, in our community.**

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any of our services please contact:

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