

DID YOU KNOW? 57% of Americans regularly hit the snooze button and spend 3.5 months of their life doing so.

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CHILDREN & SLEEP

The ABCs of Getting Their ZZZs

Grown-ups aren't the only ones who sometimes have trouble snoozing. Kids can have difficulty drifting off into dreamland too. Perhaps once they're in bed they just can't get comfortable and they're tossing and turning all night – keeping you both up. Your children's good sleep revolves around how much they're getting and how well they're sleeping once in bed.

How much sleep do children need?

Most parents won't be surprised to learn that children have their own sleep needs. These needs change over time – that's right, what works for a toddler differs dramatically from a teen or an adult, but not so much with a 12-year-old – they both benefit from a full 12 hours.

Age Group	Recommended Hours of Sleep per Day
Newborn: 0-3 months	14-17 hours
Infant: 4-12 months	12-16 hours per 24 hours
Toddler: 1-2 years	11-14 hours per 24 hours
Preschooler: 3-5 years	10-13 hours per 24 hours
School-Aged: 6-12 years	9-12 hours per 24 hours
Teen: 13-18 years	8-10 hours per 24 hours
Adult: 18-60 years	7 or more hours per night
Adult: 61-64 years	7-9 hours
Adult: 65 years and older	7-8 hours

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017: https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html

Tired kids aren't just grumpy. Children

who don't get enough sleep are at a higher risk for chronic illnesses and obesity.

10 Tips for helping your child get to sleep

- **Remove screens.** Consider nixing TVs, tablets, laptops and even cell phones from your child's room.
- **Establish a bedtime routine.** Having a pattern before bed will help signal to their mind and body that it's time for bed.
- **Cut the calories.** Eating too close to bedtime tends to keep kids up, especially if the food or drink contains caffeine or excess sugar.
- **Create a sleep environment.** Make sure her bedroom is cozy – not too hot or cold for sleeping. Ditto with too many or too few blankets.
- **Get wet.** Some children may find that taking a bath or shower before bed relaxes them.
- **Keep it quiet.** It's easier to sleep when there's not extra noise. Teens may even want to wear earplugs.
- **Check the size.** Review with your child whether her bed is the right size or if she might need a larger one because she tends to stretch out while slumbering.
- **Don't use going to bed as a punishment.** Your child might get a negative view of sleep. On the flip side, be careful not to use staying up late as a reward.
- **Avoid making bedtime a negotiation.** Give your child other choices to make, like what type of PJs to wear or what book to read together before bed.
- **Make sleep a family priority.** Kids learn from example. If sleep is important to you, chances are it will be for them too.



Is it time for a new bed for your child?

By: [Terry Cralle, RN, Sleep Expert and Co-Author of *Snoozby and the Great Big Bedtime Battle*](#)

It's tough to know when your child might be ready for a new bed – kids grow and mature at different rates, after all.

- If you're trying to decide whether it's time for your child to move from a crib to a bed, ask yourself how she deals with boundaries. Does she want to climb out of bed the second you put her in it? Don't rush it: She's probably better off in a crib.
- If your child's been complaining about having a hard time getting comfortable in bed, that's a sign he needs a bigger mattress. If you started him off in a twin, it could be time to move to a full.

• If the mattress in question is more than seven years old, consider replacing it. It's likely your child isn't getting her best night's sleep anymore, and the need for comfort and support increases with age.

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About the Expert



*Terry Cralle, RN is a registered nurse, certified clinical sleep educator, certified professional in Healthcare Quality, and has devoted much of her career to sleep health and wellness. As an educator and co-founder of a four-bed sleep disorders center, she serves as a consultant and speaker for numerous organizations, including schools, hospitals and corporations. She's the author of **Sleeping Your Way to the Top** and **Snoozby and the Great Big Bedtime Battle**. For more*

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