

KIDS AND SUMMER SLEEP

An Inside Scoop on Getting Your Kids to Sleep in the Summer (and It's Not Ice Cream)

Make the most of summer with these simple sleep tips.



School's out – and summer is now in session! Most people think of summer as a time to relax and recharge after the end of the school year, but the reality is summer can be just as busy. While we're saying goodbye to backpacks, buses and homework, we're also saying hello to swim lessons, family vacations, camp, backyard BBQs and a slew of other summer activities.

With longer days jampacked with fun-focused activities, it's easy to let the routines we take seriously during the school year take a backseat – most notably, bedtime. For kids to have the energy they need for everything from day camp to a playdate at the pool, it's important to make sleep a priority.

Here are some tips for parents to consider to help their kiddos fully enjoy summer vacation and avoid cranky, summer zombies.

Get Moving during the Day for Better Sleep at Night

There's nothing sadder than a sunny summer day spent inside watching TV. Make sure your kids take full advantage of the warm weather and all of that free time by playing outside! Kids who are active during the day use up their energy and are ready to sleep when nighttime arrives. So encourage your little ones to get outside and ride bikes, climb trees, swim, run, slam-dunk and breathe in plenty of fresh air. Playdates, trips to the park or the beach, and outdoor toys and games will keep them interested and occupied too.

Keep in mind that while playing outside is great, there are factors that can affect your kids' sleep beyond just tiring them out. If they're battling a sunburn or itchy bug bites, it can be difficult for them to rest comfortably at night. To prevent this, remember to:

- Apply sunscreen frequently – it's not only critically important for skin health, but sleeping with a sunburn can be extremely uncomfortable too.
- Prevent bug bites with repellent and treat them with no-itch treatments so kids are not up scratching all night.

Create a Summertime Sleep Schedule

It is infamously harder to put kids to bed during the summer months – and not just because the days are longer. Kids' day-to-day schedules can be unpredictable and there are going to be those nights where you want to stay up late together watching a good movie, camping outside or just sitting on the back porch talking. Summer is a unique and exciting time of the year and it deserves its own special sleep schedule. Here are three tips to improve their summer sleep regimen:

- **Move back summer bedtimes, if your schedule allows it.** Let your kids stay up a half hour to an hour longer at night, and sleep in that extra half hour to an hour each morning.
- **If you adjust bedtimes, adjust naptimes for younger kids too.** Shift naptimes to later in the morning or early afternoon.
- **Once you find the right times, stick to them.** A relaxing summer doesn't mean schedules go away completely. Staying on your regular summer sleep schedule will help everyone in the family (parents included) stay well rested.

Make It Easier for Them to Get to Sleep Once They're in Bed

Summer fun often gets kids all riled up and it can be difficult for them to wind down when it's time to go to sleep. That said, cool, quiet and dark are your buzzwords for children's bedrooms this summer. **Maintaining an environment** where your kids will be relaxed will help them get to sleep and stay asleep.

- Install room-darkening window shades so the room is dark, even if the sun is still out at bedtime.
- Turn off all electronics that create light in the room.
- Use fans, air conditioners and open windows to maintain airflow and cool temperatures.
- Consider replacing your child's mattress if it is **more than 7 years old**. You might think kids can sleep on anything, but mattresses with rips, tears or signs of distress do not provide kids with a solid foundation for quality sleep.
- Use lightweight sleep clothes and bedding to keep kids' bodies cool and comfortable.

Find more sleep tips just for kids, along with a breakdown of how much sleep kids need by age, by looking through our **ABCs of helping kids get their zzz's**.

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Keep kids on a regular summer bedtime schedule so they can play during the day and sleep tight at night #BSCSleepTips #bettersleep @BetterSleepOrg

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