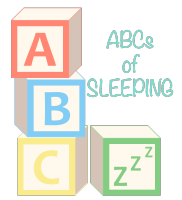


The ABCs of SLEEPING



Core concept		Details and Recommendations
A	<u>A</u>ge appropriate	It is important that children go to bed and wake up at times that ensure that they receive an age-appropriate amount of sleep. For children who have outgrown naps (which usually occurs during the preschool age period), napping during the day could be an indication that children are not getting sufficient quality and/or quantity of sleep at night.
B	<u>B</u>edtimes	Having set bedtimes and wake times, as well routines in the evening and morning are key to good sleep. It is recommended that bedtimes be no later than 9pm across childhood.
C	<u>C</u>onsistency	It is very important that these bedtimes and wake times are consistent, even on weekends (i.e., no more than 30 min difference between weekday and weekend bedtimes and wake times).
S	<u>S</u>chedule	The child's schedule in general is important – in addition to having routines at bedtime and wake time, it is also important that they have consistency throughout their day, including the timing of homework, extra-curricular activities, etc.
L	<u>L</u>ocation	It is important that the child's location for sleep includes a comfortable bed, the room is quiet, dark and cool, and the location should be consistent and familiar. Also, the child's bedroom should only be used for sleeping – children should not be sent to their bedroom for a time out. Their bedroom also should not be too exciting or distracting, and should be conducive to relaxation.
E	<u>N</u>o <u>E</u>lectronics in the bedroom or before bed	The use of electronics, including both the timing of use and the location, should also be considered – children should not be using stimulating electronic devices (i.e., iPods, cell phones, laptops, etc.) too close to bedtime (most commonly defined as one hour prior to going to bed, and it is recommended that these items not be placed in the bedroom.
E	<u>E</u>xercise and diet	Exercise and diet are both important factors that should be considered when evaluating sleep hygiene – physical activity during the day is important to healthy sleep, but should not be undertaken too close to bedtime [defined in the literature as anywhere from 1 hour to 4 hours prior to bedtime. The child's day should be organized so that there is time for a 'cool down' period before bedtime, where they slowly come down from their regular level of activity into a quiet, more restful state. Diet includes things like caffeine consumption – children should limit or totally eliminate caffeine consumption (i.e., pop) – as well as the timing of meals. Children should not be going to bed hungry, but they also should not be consuming a large meal right before bedtime. A healthy balanced diet is also important to the child's sleep as well as to their overall health.
P	<u>P</u>ositivity	Positivity surrounding sleep is also an important aspect of sleep hygiene. Parents should have a positive attitude towards sleep and the bedtime/wake time routine, and the atmosphere in the house should be positive, in order to be conducive to creating a positive mood in the child. It is important that this positive mood is relaxing and calming, rather than fun and exciting – we want the child to be winding down before bedtime. Also, doing frustrating activities right before bed (i.e., math problems for a child who struggles with math) is not recommended, as this may interfere with the child's ability to fall asleep.
I	<u>I</u>ndependence when falling asleep	Independence is also important. Once the child reaches an age where they are capable of settling into sleep without their parents, independence when falling asleep should be encouraged, in order to discourage dependence on someone else in order to fall asleep. For children, independence means no calling out and no getting out of bed, and for parents, no responding to their child calling out and returning the child to their room if they do get out of bed.
N	<u>N</u>eeds met during the day	Finally, the needs of the child should be met throughout the day. This refers to both the child's emotional needs (i.e., love, support, hugs, etc.), as well as basic physiological needs (i.e., thirst, hunger, etc.).
G	All of the above equals a <u>G</u>reat sleep!	