

# WEEK FOR BETTER SLEEP SEMAINE POUR MIEUX DORMIR

## Schoolage Children Tips Summary

Create a good environment for sleep. Make your child's room dark, quiet, and cool during the night.



Routine family evening activities are important because they help create a feeling of security in children and are a nice transition to the bedtime routine!



Prepare your child's mind and body for sleep. Use a relaxing bedtime routine.



Let in the light. Start your day with bright light.



The transition to stopping naps is different for every child! The important thing is that your child gets enough sleep and respects their natural need for sleep.



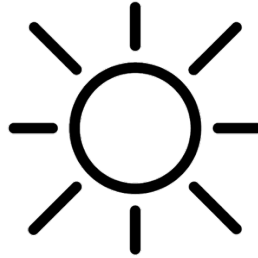
Exercise your child's superpowers. Keep your child active during the day.



Maintain a stable sleep schedule. Waking up at the same time every day can help maintain a healthy sleep schedule and make it easier to get going in the morning.

## Your whole day matters

## Day 1 Sleep Tip For Your Child: Let in the light



### Start your child's day with bright light.

Good morning, sunshine! Try to get your child exposed to some sunlight or other bright light every morning to set a clear day to night pattern, which is important for healthy sleep development.

Open your child's curtains when they first wake up to let in the light. For the most impact, get outside with your child early in the day. In the afternoon, try to go outside for a short walk. During the daytime, encourage play and activities near windows or outside.

#### Bonus tip for children with neuro-developmental disorders (NDD):

The most important factor in setting our body clock is light. This is extra helpful for children with a NDD who may not pick up on other cues to recognize day and nighttime schedules.

## Day 2 Sleep Tip For Your Child: Exercise your child's superpowers!



### Encourage your child to do something active every day.

Get into the groove — it's time to move! Moving and playing every day will help your child sleep better at night and feel better during the day. According to the [movement guidelines for Canadians](#), children need an hour of active play every day. Encourage your child to move around after sitting for a long time to give them an energy boost.

Look for simple ways to incorporate physical activity into your child's daily life. Try going to a nearby playground, or for a walk or bike around the neighborhood. If your child loves a sport, see if the school or the community offers programs. Physical activity can also happen at home by having active toys, throwing dance parties, or turning on a fun “brain break” video on YouTube that will get your child moving. Minimize active, exciting play in the hour preceding bedtime as this may make it more difficult for your child to fall asleep.

Bonus tip for children with neuro-developmental disorders: Depending on your child, you may need to look at ways of mixing active play and quiet times into your day. Avoid active or stimulating play before bed.

## Day 3 Sleep Tip For Your Child: Regular eating and drinking



**Encourage your child to eat and drink at regular times during the day to sleep well at night..**

Food is energy! Provide your child with regular meals during the day. Avoid sugary, salty, or fatty foods a few hours before bed. Avoid caffeinated foods and drinks (such as chocolate or soda) for at least six hours before bedtime.

Just like it does with sleep, our body's internal clock makes us feel hungry around the same times every day. If your child is feeling hungry before bed, try scheduling dinnertime a bit later to avoid snacking.

Bonus tip for children with neuro-developmental disorders: if your child struggles with eating, avoid the temptation to give them food or drinks overnight as this will encourage night awakenings and disrupt the day/night cycle of their body clock. A healthy snack and/or drink of milk an hour before bedtime may be helpful.

## Day 4 Sleep Tip For Your Child: To nap or not to nap?



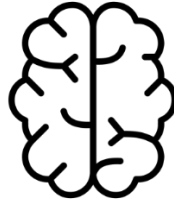
**If your child naps, get them to nap for no longer than 20 minutes.**

Beat the 3pm blues! Most of us will have a dip or slump in energy in the afternoon. Do your best to keep your child from napping after 3 p.m. Going for a walk, having a drink of water and/or a healthy snack or dancing to a favorite song can all help.

If your child falls asleep after 3pm, make sure to wake them up after 20 minutes so it doesn't affect their bedtime. This will lower the risk of going into deep sleep, but will help refresh them for the rest of the day.

School-aged children need 9 to 11 hours of sleep per day. Some children may give up their daily nap early or keep their nap for longer. Make sure they have quiet 'down times' during the day if they are not napping.

## Day 5 Sleep Tip For Your Child: Prepare your child's mind and body for sleep



### Prepare your child's mind and body for sleep by doing calming activities and avoiding electronics.

Night night, sleep tight! Try to make bedtime a happy, calm time. Help your child avoid excitement from games, and light from the TV and electronic devices for an hour or two before bed to help them to drift off to sleep easily. You can also choose a bedtime phrase together that you say as they snuggle off to sleep.

Choose activities before bed that you know are calming for your child. For some kids a bath is relaxing and a great activity for the bedtime routine. For others it is exciting and stimulating, or even something they hate. For these children, bath time is better avoided during the bedtime routine. Instead, stories or songs or a simple counting game can be helpful.

**Bonus tip:** Many medications can interfere with how well we sleep. If your child is on medication, ask your health care practitioner about the best time and way for the medication to be taken.

## Day 6 Sleep Tip For Your Child:

# Routine is your friend



Get your child to have a relaxing bedtime routine and to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

Snuggle time! Try to start your child's bedtime routine at the same time every night and keep the order of the routine constant. Find things your child finds calming and do these for a short time each night before bed such as reading or having a cuddle.

Waking your child up at the same time every day can help maintain a healthy sleep schedule and make it easier for them to get going in the morning. A consistent bedtime routine also helps keep your child's internal clock on track. Keep in mind that school age children need between 9 to 11 hours of sleep.

Talking through the bedtime routine as you do it can be very soothing. Sometimes giving your child an item that makes them feel safe and relaxed in bed such as a teddy bear or other soft toy can be helpful.

**Bonus tip for children with neuro-developmental disorders:** It can be more difficult for your child to move between activities and to recognize when they are tired or that it is bedtime. Using a visual timetable can help them understand and move through the stages to get to bed more calmly and feel ready to sleep.

## Day 7 Sleep Tip For Your Child: Make your child's bedroom ready for sleep



**Make your child's room dark, quiet, and cool during the night.**

Bed is for sleeping! Make sure your child is comfortable when in bed. They'll get their best sleep if their room is dark, quiet, and cool (about 18 degrees).

If your child wants a nightlight, choose one that is dim and yellow or orange. If there is noise near your child's room, try adding white noise in their bedroom by turning a fan on or playing sounds of rain falling.

**Bonus tip for children with neuro-developmental disorders:** Make sure the texture of your child's bedding or pajamas are comfortable and think of other sensory considerations that may be disturbing or helpful to them. Avoid using things to settle your child that will not still be there when they wake naturally in the night, as this can make it hard for your child to fall asleep again. Avoid rocking or cuddling them as they fall asleep.

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**Thank you for joining *Week for Better Sleep!***

***For additional resources visit our website at***  
**[researchsleep.ca](https://researchsleep.ca)**