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## HEALTHY SLEEP

### How do I help children develop healthy sleep habits?

- **Keep a regular sleep schedule:** Help your child go to bed and get up around the same time every day. Ensure wake-up times on school days and weekends are within two hours of each other to keep your child's body clock in a regular rhythm.
- **Avoid daytime naps for older kids:** For children five years or older, avoid daytime naps. Naps longer than 20 minutes can make it hard to get to sleep at night, to get into deep sleep, and to wake.
- **Relax before bed:** A regular bedtime routine of bath, teeth brushing, and a story help younger children relax and feel ready for sleep. Older children can wind down by reading a book, listening to gentle music. Turning off electronics an hour before bed will also help your child fall asleep.
- **Make sure your child feels safe at night:** If your child feels scared about going to bed or being in the dark, you can offer praise and rewards for being brave. Avoid scary TV shows, movies, computer games or books and consider a night light.
- **Check noise and light in your child's bedroom:** A dark, quiet, private space is important for good sleep. Turn off electronic stimulation in your child's bedroom at least one hour before bedtime. This includes loud music, mobile phones, computer screens and TV.
- **Eat well and avoid caffeine:** Serve your child a satisfying evening meal at a reasonable time. Feeling hungry or too full before bed can make it hard to fall asleep or have good quality sleep. Ensure children eat healthy and avoid energy drinks, coffee, tea, chocolate and cola in late afternoon.
- **Get natural light during the day and active play:** Encourage your child to natural light by getting outside during the day, especially in the morning. This will help produce melatonin to regulate her sleep cycles. Physical activity and exercise also help children to sleep longer and better. However, avoid sports late night as stimulation and increase in body temperature can make it harder to go to sleep.
- **Reduce anxiety:** Worries and anxieties can affect your child's sleep. Talk about their worries together or encourage older children to journal their thoughts. Parents can also access mental health support.