



Family Well-Being: Sleeping, Waking, and Bedtime Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS); Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families by promoting the benefits and importance of sleep, as well as the appropriate amounts of sleep for children at different ages. Well-rested children are better prepared for school and social activities. This Sleeping, Waking and Bedtime Tip Sheet corresponds to page 7 and 8 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- As an adult, describe how you prepare for sleep (e.g., routines, etc.).
- Describe the typical routine of putting your child (children) to bed.
- How does lack of sleep affect your child's mood?

Cultural Considerations:

- Different cultures can have a different sense of time—for some cultures, time is more flexible and relationships are more of a priority. In the U.S., days can be tightly scheduled and punctuality is important. This can be a difficult transition for many refugees. Keeping a regular schedule—including a regular bedtime—may be hard for some families.
- Many refugees may sleep in a “family bed” (e.g., children sharing a bed with parents or each other). These arrangements may have a variety of origins: cultural practice; a sense of security in a new place; living previously in small or one-room structures; a source of warmth; or the belief that making children sleep alone is a kind of child neglect (e.g., the child may be afraid, lonely, or cold.)
- Refugees who live in apartment buildings with other refugee families, or in homes with many relatives and different work schedules, may have busy, active homes with people coming and going frequently. This can make regular sleep times difficult.
- Families who maintain regular contact with relatives in other time zones may need to get up early or stay up late in order to call, or they may get phone calls in the middle of the night.
- Some families may not be used to using alarm clocks.

Remember to Mention:

- Providing children with enough sleep and rest time is important to their development. Well-rested children are more alert during waking hours, which promotes learning. Both the amount and quality of sleep are important (e.g., making sure that sleep is uninterrupted, consistent, and that it falls within children's natural sleep patterns.)
- Children who do not sleep enough are at a higher risk of developing health issues. These issues include obesity and related chronic conditions, such as diabetes; and social and emotional conditions, such as anxiety or depression.
- Watching TV immediately before bedtime can lead to resistance to bedtime and makes it harder for children to fall asleep.
- Providing children over 12 months old with a comfort item (e.g., a stuffed animal or blanket) can help your child relax and go to sleep.



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Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements/I304>
45 CFR I304.23 Child nutrition (c)(5)

Resources on ECKLC:

Early Head Start National Resource Center

- **Beyond Sweet Dreams and Bedtime Stories: Supporting Healthy Sleep for Infants and Toddlers-Webcast.**
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/multimedia/webcasts/SleepWebcast.htm>
- **News You Can Use: The Culture of Sleep and Child Care.**
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/early-learning/mental-health/NYCU%20Culture%20of%20Sleep%20PDF.pdf>

National Center on Health

- **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): Tips for Parents and Caregivers.**
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/health-literacy-family-engagement/family-education/SuddenInfantDea.htm>
- **Safety Tips for Sleeping Babies**
English: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/safety-injury-prevention/safe-healthy-environments/SafetyTipsforS.htm>
Spanish: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/salud/Health/salud-seguridad-ambiental/ConsejosdeDegur.htm>

References:

Boys Town – Getting Kids to Sleep Using a Bedtime Routine.

<http://www.parenting.org/article/getting-kids-to-sleep-using-a-bedtime-routine>

Healthy Children.org – A Lullaby for Good Health.

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/A-Lullaby-for-Good-Health.aspx>

KidsHealth – What Sleep Is and Why All Kids Need It.

http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/body/not_tired.html

Sleepforkids.org

<http://www.sleepforkids.org/index.html>

