

# Sleep

## Understand what is normal for your child

- Many parents struggle with their baby's sleep patterns. Some common struggles are settling at bedtime and waking in the night.
- It takes most babies the first 5 to 6 months of their lives to learn to fall asleep on their own. During this time your baby needs your help to fall asleep.
- It is normal for babies to wake in the night. Sometimes your baby will need your help to get back to sleep. Other times, your baby may fuss a bit and go back to sleep on her own.
- Over time, your baby's sleep patterns change. The chart below shows the average time babies spend sleeping in a day. Remember, every baby is different. Your baby may sleep more or less than this.

Age	Average amount of sleep per day
Newborns (birth to 6 months)	Up to 16 hours
Older babies (6 months to 1 year)	Up to 14 hours
Toddlers (1 to 3 years)	10-13 hours
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	10- 12 hours

## Look at your child and her surroundings

- It is important to know when your baby is feeling tired. Your baby is showing signs that she is tired when she is:
  - rubbing her eyes
  - looking away from you
  - putting her hands up behind her ears
  - fussing or crying

## Respond sensitively to your child

- When your baby is showing signs that she is tired, there are many ways to respond sensitively. A bedtime routine is one way to respond sensitively and can help your baby get ready for sleep. A bedtime routine may include:



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- bathing your baby
  - putting your baby's pajamas on
  - reading to your baby
  - turning down the lights
  - making the room quiet
  - gently rocking your baby
- Being consistent with a bedtime routine will help your baby know what to expect. Share your baby's bedtime routine with others who care for your baby.
  - There are times when it is difficult to follow your baby's bedtime routine. For example, when your baby is sick. During these times, it is important to meet your baby's immediate needs. When life is back to normal, help your baby to return back to her bedtime routine.
  - Respond sensitively when your baby wakes in the night. First, you may want to try:
    - showing your face to your baby
    - talking to your baby in a soothing voice
    - gently putting your hand on your baby's tummy
    - stroking your baby
  - If your baby continues to cry, try:
    - picking up your baby
    - rocking your baby
    - singing to your baby
  - If you are starting to feel frustrated, put your baby in a safe place, like a crib, and take a short break. Remember, it is more important to stay calm than it is to stop your baby from crying.

## Grow as a parent

- Most parents of babies are tired and stressed due to lack of sleep and the work involved in caring for a baby. Getting enough sleep and eating well will help you have the energy to care for your child.
- Taking time for yourself helps you cope as a parent. Asking for help from family members, so you can rest, is one way to take time for yourself. Another idea is to attend parent and baby programs so your baby can have fun with less work from you.

