



Establishing Good Sleep Routines

Here are some tips from the professionals that you may want to share with your child or use with your child if they're having problems falling asleep and staying asleep:

Reduce caffeine intake and avoid caffeine for 4 - 6 hours before bedtime. This includes caffeinated sodas.

Drink less fluids before going to sleep.

Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime.

Avoid nicotine close to bedtime.

Make sure the room is the right temperature and humidity for them.

They should exercise regularly, preferably in the afternoon.

They should establish a relaxing routine, like soaking in a hot tub or bath before bedtime.

Establish a regular bedtime and waketime schedule.

If they can't sleep, they should get out of bed and engage in a relaxing activity. Do not allow them to fall asleep in other places.

They should get into a brightly lit room as soon as possible in the morning but avoid bright light at night. Keep the blinds adjusted at night so early morning light will help them wake up.

Keep to the routine even on the weekends. Getting up early on weekends may seem a "drag," but it will help them sleep better during the week.

Try to prevent or discourage napping during the day. If they must nap, try to make it for less than 30 minutes.

Teach them breathing relaxation exercises that they can use to help them unwind to fall asleep.

If your child is having frequent sleep-related problems, be sure to tell their pediatrician or doctor.

If sleep problems are chronic, try to avoid scheduling the "heavy" academic classes for first period.

As difficult as your child may be to rouse in the morning, they need to learn to get themselves up. If necessary, purchase two or more radio alarm clocks, and have them set to different stations and set to go off at different times, so that by the time the last one goes off (loudly), the child is more likely to wake up to it. Some people do better if they allow themselves to hit the 'snooze' button on the first one, but some people do better if they train themselves to swing their legs over the side of the bed and put their feet on the floor the moment they hear the first one go off.