

# WHAT IS EARLY YEARS SLEEP HYGIENE?

Sleep hygiene in the early years (babies and young children) is about building healthy sleep habits from the start so children can fall asleep easily and stay asleep. It's less about strict rules and more about consistency, routine, and a supportive environment.

## Consistent sleep schedule

Even for young children, regular bedtimes and wake-up times help regulate their internal clock.

- Babies: flexible but gradually structured
- Toddlers/preschoolers: more predictable routines



## Calming bedtime routine

A simple, repeated routine signals “sleep time.” For example:

- Bath - pajamas - story - cuddle - bed
- Keep it calm and consistent every night.



## Sleep-friendly environment

- Dark
- Quiet
- Comfortable temperature
- Safe sleep space (especially important for infants)



## Go to bed drowsy but awake

This helps them learn to fall asleep on their own rather than relying on sleep props like rocking or feeding.



## Feeding and sleep balance

Avoid creating a strong association where feeding is the only way to fall asleep (especially in infants).



## Avoid screens before bed

Screen exposure can overstimulate children and interfere with sleep hormones, even more strongly than in adults.

## Age-appropriate naps

- Babies need multiple naps
- Toddlers usually need one to two daytime naps depending on exact age
- Too much or too little daytime sleep can disrupt nighttime sleep.



## Respond consistently to night waking

Children naturally wake during the night. Gentle, predictable responses help them feel secure while learning to self-soothe.

