

## Do sleep interventions work?

Many parents and caregivers look for help and advice related to their child's sleep. Methods such as "crying it out" or "sleep training" might be suggested as sleep interventions. Sleep interventions should not be used with children younger than 6 months old. Before your child is 6 months old, they will not understand that when you leave the room, you still exist. This can cause your child stress, which may affect their quality of sleep.



## Should my child sleep through the night?

Babies, from birth to 6 months old, do not have a sleep pattern. They depend on their caregivers to help them get the sleep they need. Many people think that babies should sleep through the night by the time they are 6 months old, but it is not that easy. Older children may also not sleep through the night.

## What can you do if your child wakes up at night?

Even at night, babies and young children may need something. Babies may cry to tell you that they need something. Young children may let you know they need something by calling out. It is important that caregivers meet these needs. You are not spoiling your child by responding to them if they wake at night. By responding to your child's needs, you are helping them to feel safe, important, and supported. This is the basis of developing a healthy relationship and secure attachment.

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# SLEEP Skills



saskatchewan  
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our goal is **healthy** children

**For Children 0 to 6  
Years of Age**

## Why is sleep important?

Sleep helps us to be healthy; physically, mentally, and emotionally. For young children, sleep helps them grow and develop.

### Amount of Sleep a Child Needs Over a Full Day and Night

12 - 16  
HOURS



4 - 12 months old

11 - 14  
HOURS



1 - 2 Years Old

10 - 13  
HOURS



3 - 5 Years Old

9 - 12  
HOURS



6 Years Old

This image shows how much sleep young children should get, including naps throughout the day.

Recommendations for the amount of sleep for infants younger than 4 months of age do not exist because there is a wide range of normal sleep times and patterns. Remember that all children are different, including their sleep patterns. The image may be helpful to determine if your child is getting enough sleep. As your child grows and learns, you may notice changes in their sleep. Changes in sleep patterns during this time are normal.

## How can you help your child go to sleep?

You can teach your child sleep skills so that they are better able to go to sleep. These include skills like self-soothing and being able to fall asleep if they wake at night. Learning sleep skills takes a long time. While children are learning these skills, they may call out to let you know they need something. Parents and caregivers are not spoiling children by responding to their needs.

To help young children learn sleep skills, you can do the following:

- Stay calm as a parent or caregiver. This can help your child to be calm and help them have a better sleep.
- Put young children to sleep in a quiet, dark, and cool room, even at naptime.
- Use white noise (like a fan) to block out noises.
- Block all lights in the room, including light from electronics.
- Avoid turning on lights when your child needs care at night.
- Follow a bedtime routine, like having a bath and reading a book before bed.
- Limit the amount young children (1-6 years of age) drink before bed. Babies (under a year old) should feed as needed, including at night.
- Have quiet time for a few hours before bed.

