



Healthy Sleep Habits for New School Start Times

Elementary Schools will now begin classes at 7:50 am
Secondary Schools will begin at 8:35 am

September is upon us and it's time to begin thinking about how to prepare your child for back to school. Healthy sleep habits are vital. Starting to build these habits now will ensure a happy, well-rested child for the fall and the future.

Tips for Healthy Sleep

- Gradually Adjust Bedtimes.

“Don't wait until the night before school starts to adjust your child's bedtime. The sudden change could make it difficult for him or her to fall—and stay—asleep. Instead, slowly start making his or her bedtime earlier about two weeks before the first day (try pushing it forward five to 15 minutes each day). This will help your child's circadian rhythm adjust to the new schedule. Not sure what time to set bedtime? Kids aged seven to 12 need 10 to 11 hours of sleep, while older kids need eight to nine hours” ([Sleep.org](https://www.sleep.org)).

- Maintain sleep schedule, with a consistent wake-up time and exposure to morning light, even on the weekend.

Sleeping in on weekends cannot make up for sleep missed during the week” ([Sleep.org](https://www.sleep.org)).

- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Dim lights offer quiet activities to help kids wind down ([Sleep Foundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)).

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- Limit television, video games, and other electronic distractions an hour before bedtime.

Dr. Kelly Chiu of [Boston Children's Hospital](#) "says technology is at the root of a lot of sleep issues. She recommends setting clear rules around technology early and sticking with them." Her advice:

"Turn off all devices off by 9 p.m. "Devices are what's keeping most kids up late. Without them, there's not a lot else to do late at night, and kids will be able to go to fall sleep more easily."

Only allow devices to be used in the common areas of your home, not in the bedrooms.

Don't allow kids to use devices until their chores or academic work is done" ([Boston Children's Hospital](#)).

- Avoid caffeine. (Beginning about 6 hours before bedtime) ([Sleep Foundation.org](#)).
- Keep a regular meal schedule, avoiding late dinners ([Sleep Foundation.org](#)).
- Maintain a peaceful bedroom environment. " ...a dark room, comfortable bed, and a room temperature that is neither too hot nor too cold. Electronic distractions like television, computers, or video games should be removed from your child's room and set up in a different location" ([Sleep Foundation.org](#)).
- Be a role model – Set a good example for your child. Establish your own regular sleep cycle and maintain a home that promotes healthy sleep. ([Sleep Foundation.org](#))

How much sleep does my child need?

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) offers guidelines for childhood sleep. They recommend children from 6-12 years old aim for 9-12 hours and teens aim for between 8-10 hours. The American Academy of Pediatrics has endorsed these numbers ([Healthychildren.org](#)).

For more sleep tips, including a podcast on the topic and suggestions for talking about sleep with your older children, visit [Screenagersmovie.com](#).

You can also learn more from Dr. Kelly Chiu at [Boston Children's Hospital](#).