

# How to Set a Sleep Schedule for Your Tiny Tot



*A tiny tot in siesta mode*

A good night's sleep is one of the most important habits that a child needs to develop to stay happy and healthy. If you are struggling to put your kiddo to a peaceful slumber, we've got some helpful tips. Here's what you need to do to get your babies to snooze well and get enough rest.

**Sleep Hygiene:** For kids to be able to put their best foot forward, it is important to be alert and awake. A sleepy kid will not be able to fully focus on the daytime activities she indulges in. The practices that are undertaken to achieve proper and quality night sleep is called sleep hygiene.

Dr. Prashant Chhajed, MD, DETRD, DNB, FCCP (USA) Consultant Chest Physician and specialist in Sleep Disordered Breathing and owner of Chhajed Pulmonology Sleep Centre in Mumbai says, "Kids should be made to sleep at a fixed time and get up at a particular time, so that a routine is set. The use of TV, phones, iPads or even books should be completely avoided in the bedroom or rather on the bed."

**Sleep Disturbances:** Short daytime naps, intake of caffeine and heavy food can also cause kids to keep up late in the night. Playing with mobile phones, video games, tabs or watching TV should also be avoided when going to bed. These can lead to disturbed sleep patterns. Experts even suggest that studying before going to bed should also stop.

Mariya Soni, mother of a two-and-a-half-year-old baby girl says, “The main problem I faced with my princess’ sleep routine was the surrounding noise that would wake her up in an instant and make her cranky and groggy.”

Mariya began to set a routine wherein there would be complete silence in the house especially in the room that her little one would sleep.

**Correlation:** Dr. Chhajed suggests, “The best way to create a routine is to establish the correct association. Children must correlate the bed with sleep which will help them maintain good sleep hygiene.” This is also why Dr. Chhajed suggests nullifying all activity on her bed other than sleeping.

**Routines:** Mommy Zainab Kachwala, mommy of two-year-old Burhannuddin says, “I learnt that babies can be trained through appropriate timings and set routines.” When a routine is set and followed, the baby’s body clock begins to adjust according to the schedule and makes it easier for the kid to get a good night’s sleep.

“I also realised that a regular massage would relax my little boy and help put him to snooze immediately. So from the time that he was twenty days old, I would massage him regularly before shutting the lights. Having a fixed time schedule also helped a great deal and I fixed 10 PM as the cut-off time for my little one,” adds Zainab.

She shares, “Slowly the routine began to set in and with a few tactics like turning off lights, finishing feeds, maintaining silence and singing a lullaby. I managed to set a schedule that worked to put him to sleep easily.”

**Consistency:** It is important to be consistent in your efforts. Whatever you’re doing to help your baby sleep well continue it for a sometime so that the baby gets used to it. Dr. Chhajed says, “Be consistent with your routine whatever it may be.”

Initially try out a routine for a couple of weeks to establish a pattern.

Zainab says, “The first two months were difficult but soon I figured what works. The first day of the routine he slept at 1AM and then week after week when the same routine was consistently followed he began to understand when it was time to sleep.”

“I think making an appropriate schedule and following it consistently really works wonders. It also helps the child understand when he must sleep. For me it was two months of trial and error,” adds Zainab.

Remember a well slept baby will be a happy and cheerful baby.