

The Importance of Routine

Routine and predictability are very important to children of every age. It helps promote security and you will see that children thrive developmentally and emotionally. It is during sleep that their little bodies are growing and developing most rapidly; healing, and rejuvenating. We need to value their sleep and treat it like the gold that it truly is!

A feeding routine of eat-activity-sleep-your time is an 'EASY' (Baby Whisperer) routine to get into:

E - You begin in the morning by feeding upon wake-up.

A - activity and play time.

S - sleep

Y - now it is your time (we all know this is rare ;)

Carry on this pattern throughout the day. This routine helps your child to disassociate the need to eat in order to sleep. Of course, you will want to feed your baby before bedtime so put the feeding near the beginning of the bedtime routine. The night feedings will continue to be the same, feed then sleep.

A bedtime routine creates positive associations with sleep. Positive associations help infants and toddlers learn to develop the very important life skill of independent sleep. First, set the stage in the bedroom with shades drawn, a dim lamp on, and calm, relaxing bedtime rituals. You can start as early as infants: beginning with a bath, lotion massage, singing and cuddles. As her attention span grows - you can add in books, baby yoga, talk about her day, and increase the length of the routine up to 20-30min is great! (A nap routine is important too and can be just a shorter version of the bedtime routine, eg.10-15min). This is followed by putting her into her crib/bed drowsy-but-awake. { Infants can start drowsy-but-awake 1x/day around 8 weeks old and increase the number of times per day as she grows}. This means that she is awake enough to know that she is doing it on her own and she can recognize where she is. She is also sleepy enough to get to sleep within about 10-15 minutes. These routines are a perfect time for bonding*

and developing a secure attachment with your child: she has your undivided attention, you are helping her through the transition from active play time to sleep, and you get that precious time for snuggles.

Sleep and wake-up routines are great ways to follow your little one's circadian rhythm and to help her set it as well. You will see that her circadian rhythm, or 'internal clock', will have her sleeping and rising at nearly the same time every day. She will have the best quality sleep if you follow this rhythm. The right AMOUNT and QUALITY of sleep can positively affect our children's: attention span, adaptability, aggressive behavior, eating habits, irritability and frustration, moodiness and emotional issues, ability to play independently, and ability to take in fully and learn from their environment. You can help improve your little angel's behavior and mood by ensuring that she gets enough sleep and encouraging her to learn the skill of falling asleep on her own.

Every child has different sleep requirements depending on their age and temperament. Consistency and routine are very important tools for us to have as parents and definitely two of the most important factors in helping our children thrive.