APPRENDRE À DORMIR

Sleeping through the night or getting enough sleep over 24 hours? Variability between children

Popular science communication: Marie-Hélène Pennestri, PhD and Catherine Lord, PhD

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Many parents wonder when their children will sleep through the night, sometimes even before their baby is born.

It is important to have **realistic expectations** because it is true that most children wake up at night during the first year. For example, parents of 6-month-old babies reported **an average of 3 reported awakenings per night** in one study, which means that some babies had more and some had less. These awakenings are normal and helpful. They occur for different reasons such as changes between sleep trains every 45-60 minutes for toddlers, to fulfill an emotional or physical need such as reassurance or feeding (necessary until at least 6 months of age and sometimes more).

Just as with the acquisition of walking, each child develops and matures at their own pace. The maturation of the brain allows children to acquire the ability to walk, as well as to acquire the ability to link sleep trains or to no longer need to feed during the night.

This is reassuring:

- Daytime sleep counts just as much as nighttime sleep in assessing whether your child is getting enough sleep (even with nighttime awakenings) – read Sleep Duration Recommendations
- Nighttime awakenings do not have a negative impact on development
- As the brain matures, your child will be able to sleep through the night, i.e., the child will be able to sleep consecutively without reporting nighttime awakenings. Patience is required because only about 65% of children have reached the level of brain maturity to sleep through the night at or before 6 months of age.
- Signs of lack of sleep during the day are good indicators of whether your child needs more sleep.

What do scientists mean by “sleeping through the night”? Getting 6 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep – without waking up at night or signaling their parents.

Listen to Dr. Marie-Hélène Pennestri talk about variability among children.

Watch “**Sleeping through the night or getting enough sleep over 24 hours? Variability between children** ” to learn more

Inspiration and scientific sources:

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