APPRENDRE À DORMIR

Do all children stop taking naps at the same age? Short sleeper? Long sleeper?



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Date : 29 September 2023

There comes a time when we all ask ourselves: **Does my child still need to take a nap?**

A need that changes with age, just like learning to walk

Around the age of 3, most children begin their transition to consolidated nighttime sleep and only sleep during the night. This means that **nighttime sleep becomes more restorative**, reducing the need for daytime naps. The daytime sleep time shifts to nighttime sleep. Therefore, no longer taking naps often means having longer nights for some.

This transition occurs at a unique pace for each child, and the change is gradual. The need for naps can vary from day to day. Similar to the acquisition of walking, some days (and some children) may revert to crawling before walking 100% of the time.

A child's sleep needs vary greatly between 0 and 5 years of age, and several factors affect this need. A child's sleep need is measured over 24 hours and includes both daytime (nap) and nighttime sleep hours. The number of sleep hours needed varies significantly among children, and it is not possible to apply a simple accounting logic to determine the optimal duration of sleep because one must consider the specific needs of each child, including whether they require naps or not. During the transition, daytime hours will now become part of nighttime sleep hours.

Short sleeper or Long sleeper? Don't lose sight of signs of lack of sleep to adjust accordingly

Between the ages of 3 and 5, sleep needs typically range from 10 to 13 hours. Like adults, there are "**short sleepers**" who require around 10 hours, "**average sleepers**," and "**long sleepers**" **who may need around 13 hours of sleep or even more to be at their best.** Genetics play a significant role in sleep needs, so a parent who is themselves a short or long sleeper will likely have a child with similar needs.

It's often observed that **short sleepers tend to start their transition earlier than long sleepers. Some children may no longer need to take naps as early as 2 years old.**

The total number of sleep hours within a 24-hour period often remains the same, but it will likely require adjustments such as an earlier bedtime or a later wake-up time to concentrate those hours of sleep during the night.

During the transition, it becomes especially important to pay attention to **signs of lack of sleep** to determine if the child has sufficient sleep, if they need less daytime sleep, or conversely, if **naps seem to be affecting their nighttime sleep**.

Signs of lack of sleep are particularly important during this transition to determine how to adjust sleep schedules, both during daytime and nighttime, on a day-to-day basis for a while. It may not always be possible to adjust nap times, but in the evening, parents can take them into consideration and observe their child's signs of lack of sleep to adjust bedtime as needed.

The text **Did my child sleep today? How can we manage the transition together when naps are no longer needed?** provides some insights for managing the transition to nighttime sleep while taking into account the context of childcare settings.

Listen to Geneviève Forest, Ph.D. and her student Rachel Pétrin, Ph. D. candidate talk about this transition to nighttime sleep.

Watch «**Do all children stop taking naps at the same age? Short sleeper? Long sleeper?** » to learn more.

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