



# Easy Steps to Better Sleep: 1 to 3 Year Old Toddler

## WHAT IS SLEEP LIKE FOR YOUR CHILD AT THIS STAGE?

Good sleep is essential for every child as sleep has a significant impact on learning and behavioural development. Adequate sleep quantity and good sleep quality contribute to optimal brain function and the overall growth and health of your child. When your child sleeps well, it also reduces the disruptions to your family's sleep.



It is important that your child's good sleep practices are reinforced at this stage as he/she will undergo various developmental milestones which could affect his/her sleep.

## SLEEP PATTERNS

- Children in this phase would sleep an average of 11 to 13 hours over a 24-hour period, inclusive of 1 to 2 daytime naps lasting a total of 2 to 3 hours.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.



## DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES IN YOUR CHILD

- At this age, your child would experience significant development in the areas of gross motor, cognitive, language and social/emotional skills. His/her independent mobility, curiosity and increasing need for autonomy would often lead to limit-testing behaviours and hence, resisting sleep at bedtime.
- Children with separation anxiety may also experience increased bedtime resistance and problematic night wakings.

# SLEEP CHALLENGES

## Bedtime Resistance

### Presentation

- Resisting going to bed and/or demanding caregiver attention.
- Taking longer than 30 minutes to fall asleep.<sup>2</sup>



### Management

- Implement a sleep schedule with consistent bedtime and daytime naps. Avoid napping beyond 4pm.<sup>3</sup>
- Establish a consistent bedtime routine.
- If needed, allow your child to use the same transitional object (e.g., soft toy) at bedtime and naptime.
- Establish and enforce appropriate boundaries during bedtime. Put your child to bed drowsy but awake to allow your child to learn to self-soothe.
- Use positive reinforcement the following morning to reward your child's good behaviour at bedtime.
- Use of electronic devices and screens as part of the bedtime routine is strongly discouraged.



<sup>2</sup> Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.

<sup>3</sup> Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.



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