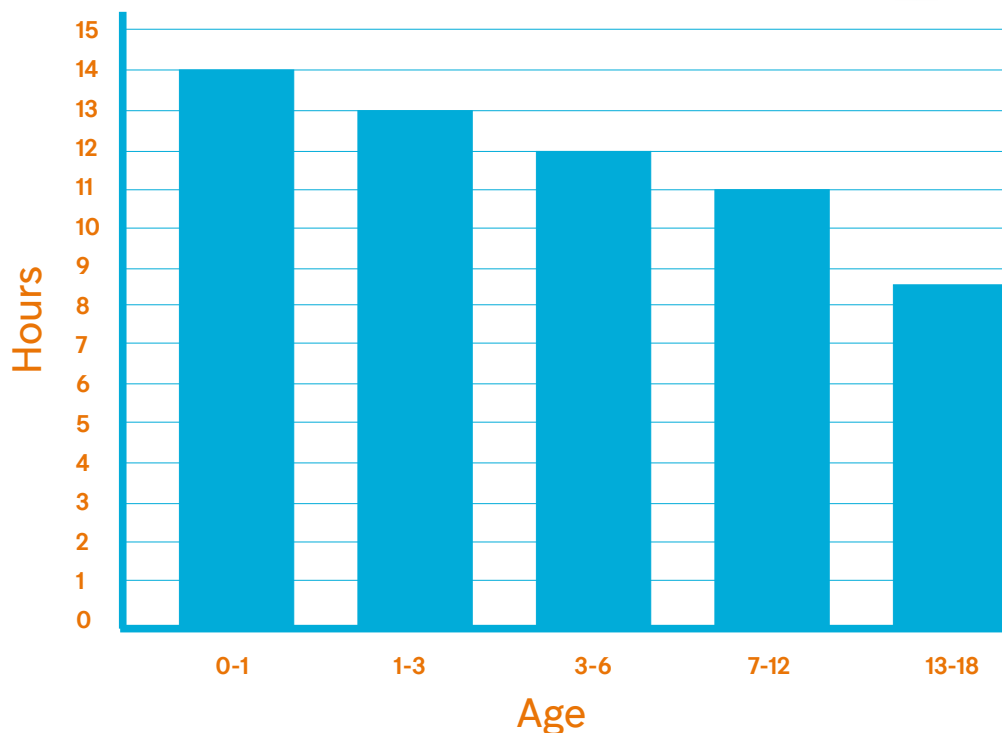


Why is sleep so important?

Sleep plays an essential role in developing our brains and repairing our bodies. The amount we sleep and the quality of our sleep are equally important to our mental health and long-term physical health. Good quality REM sleep allows different parts of our brain to talk to each other, which creates new insights and consolidate information we took in during the day. Similarly, non-REM sleep allows our physical body to slow and rest, allowing us to wake up rejuvenated in the morning.

How much sleep does my child need?

Generally speaking, children require less sleep as they grow older. Here's a general guide to how many hours of sleep children need to support their growth according to age.



Apart from supporting your children to get the optimal hours of sleep, it is also important to bear in mind that it is natural for adolescents to fall asleep later than young children and adults. This is because their bodies release melatonin, a hormone that helps us fall asleep, later in the evening.

The science of falling asleep

Our bodies are naturally equipped to produce a hormone called melatonin that prompts us to sleep in the evening. Evolutionarily speaking, melatonin kicks in as the sunset in the late afternoon. However, nowadays there are multiple external factors that impact on our ability to fall asleep. These factors include exposure to bright light, caffeine consumption and a faster pace of life. With that said, there are strategies we can put in place to support a healthy sleeping habit in your family.

Sleeping yays and nays

Yay	Nay	Why
Have a sleep routine.	Sleeping at different times each night.	Ever experienced jet lag? Our bodies naturally thrive on having a regular sleeping rhythm. When that rhythm is disrupted, we struggle to fall asleep.
Dim light at home in the evening.	Have bright light on throughout the evening.	Our bodies rely on interpreting the amount of light that comes in our eyes to determine whether it's day or night. Too much light can 'trick' our bodies into thinking it's still day time.
Limit screen time in the evening.	Have screen time 2 hours before bed.	Again, light impacts on our body clocks, especially blue lights.
Have water or warm milk in the evening.	Have caffeinated or sugary drinks, such as hot chocolate, coke, coffee etc, in the late afternoon/ evening.	Sweet drinks often contain caffeine. While they are not as caffeinated as coffee or tea, they deter our bodies from releasing melatonin.
Meditate or listening to quiet music.	Try to solve emotionally-charged problems arise in the day.	Racing thoughts stop us from falling asleep. Ironically, sleep will help us find creative solutions to problems that arise during the day so do 'sleep on it'.
Do some colouring if wake up in the middle of the night.	Play games on the phone if wake up in the middle of the night.	Playing games on our phones not only exposes ourselves to bright light, but also engages us cognitively, which will make it even harder for us to fall asleep again.

10 ideas to include in your child's sleep routine

1. Take hot bath or shower
2. Do some light movements such as yoga or light stretches
3. Have family time to reflect on your day
4. Read a bedtime story
5. Listen to an audio sleep story or a guided meditation
6. Listen to quiet music
7. Have a glass of warm milk
8. Colouring or doodling
9. Journaling
10. Light chores such as folding clothes or tidying up room
11. Prepare a hot water bottle
12. Put on eye mask or ear plugs

