



Sleep Health for Your Child with Special Needs

1. How much sleep does your child need?

- Newborn: 12 months: 16-12 hours
- 12 months: 7 years: 12-13 hours
- 7 - 9 years: ~13-10 hours
- 9 years and older: 11-9 hours

2. Children need to learn to fall asleep using their own strategies

- Independence in sleep improves sleep consolidation and overall quality
- Avoid "props" where your child is dependent on you to fall asleep
- Avoid pacifiers, feeding, rocking, cradling, etc.
- For babies: make sure that they go down awake

3. Make bedtime early

- It's what mother nature wants us to do!
- Ideal bedtime: between 6:30-8:00pm
- Prevents overtiredness and helps keep off "sleep debt"
- Gives parents a little time to themselves, too!

5. Keep a consistent bedtime and naptime routine

- Cues brain and body that it's time to "shutdown" for the night
- Creates predictability – makes self-soothing easier
- Bedtime routine: 20-30', Nap time: 10-15'
- Avoid play time and screen time when making a bedtime routine
- Use these techniques for nap time routine, too.
- Keep the room dark - avoid any light influence.

6. Keep your child active!

- Helps to set your child's circadian rhythm
- Minimum: 1 hour
- Whatever your child's highest mobility level is, do lots of this!
- Babies and immobile kids: lots and lots (and lots) of tummy time.
- Physical activity improves the respiratory system.

7. Nutrition can greatly impact sleep

- The stomach is the second brain
- Avoid processed foods, sugar, and salty snacks
- Consider avoiding dairy and gluten.
- Don't use sleep aids, if it can be avoided.
- Give "sleep boosting foods"

8. Consistency is key to success!

- Consistency in all aspects – routine, schedule, bedtime, sleep environment, and expectations.
- Once you've decided to implement any of the above recommendations, stick with it! Otherwise it will cause confusion and frustration for everyone.
- Change is hard, but stick with it – the results will come soon enough!

My passion is helping parents like you develop customized plans for solving child sleep problems, so if you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch!

If you'd like more information about **booking a full-service sleep consultation** with me visit my website at:

www.melissadomansleepconsulting.com

or you can always call me directly at 267-342-4498
or e-mail domansleepconsults@gmail.com

Rest Well,
Melissa