

## Sleep Tips For Children And Infants

(StatePoint) Sleep is vital for children's overall health and development. That's why it's important that children develop good sleep habits, right from the start.

"Parents of infants need to know how to help their baby safely fall asleep," says Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP, of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). "And older children will benefit from an environment that helps them get enough sleep."

Here are some tips for safe and adequate sleep from the experts at the AAP:

### Safer Sleep

Babies up to 1 year of age should always be placed on their backs on a firm surface to sleep. This will reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, which is the leading cause of death in the United States for babies between 1 month and 1 year old.

"While we don't know what causes SIDS, we have learned how parents can dramatically lower the risks," says Dr. Block.

Make sure the crib, bassinet or play yard meets current safety standards and hasn't been recalled. And make sure to keep all objects -- including soft toys, blankets and crib bumpers -- out of the crib, as they can increase the risk of suffocation or strangulation. Consider using a sleeper instead blankets, and make sure the baby's head remains uncovered.

The crib can be in the same room as you sleep, but do not place the baby in the same bed as you. Also, keep the baby away from smoke and smokers.

### Warm, Not Hot

Keep the room where your baby sleeps at a comfortable temperature. In general, dress your baby in no more than one extra layer than you would wear. Your baby may be too hot if she is sweating or if her chest feels hot.

You may offer a pacifier, which can help reduce the risk of SIDS. However, other products like wedges,



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**Always place infants on their back when sleeping.**

positioners, special mattresses and specialized sleep surfaces have not been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS. If you are breastfeeding, wait until breastfeeding is going well before offering a pacifier, usually around 3 to 4 weeks.

Children should be taken out of a crib by the time they are 35 inches tall.

### Establish Routines

If your child or teen seems to be having trouble sleeping, try altering the environment or establishing a routine. For example, see if your child sleeps better in a dark room or with a night light. Do not allow a TV in your child's bedroom, and make sure he or she doesn't watch or read anything upsetting or scary within two hours of bedtime. Instead, a bath, warm drink or story time will help a child unwind.

For more tips to help your young one get a good night's sleep, visit the AAP's website for parents, [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org).

If sleeping problems persist, consult your pediatrician. Even sleepers with the toughest problems can learn good habits.