

Primary School Children

Normal Sleep Patterns

Sleeping Sound

Role of Sleep

Sleep is important for children's learning and behaviour. Sleep helps to restore physical and mental health and keep our memory and immune system on track. Sleep also helps children's brains grow.

Children who do not get enough sleep may not be able to learn as well as their school friends who get enough sleep.

Science of Sleep

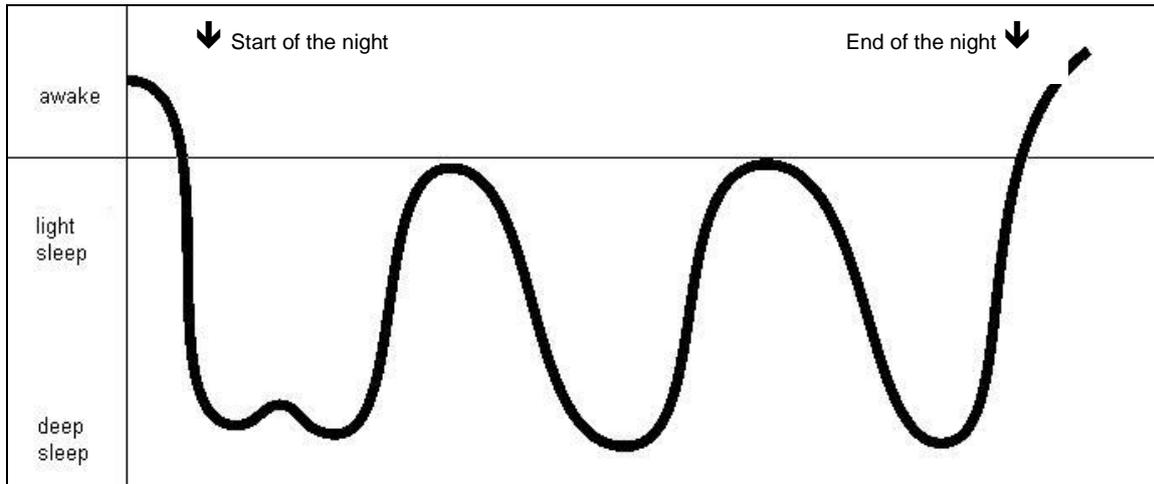
Circadian rhythms, or sleep-wake cycles, are controlled by light and dark and take time to develop. They are stages of sleep that develop from about six weeks of age. By the age of two, most children have spent more time asleep than awake and overall, a child will spend 40% of their childhood asleep!

There are two types of sleep that we cycle through many times each night. These cycles last 45 – 60 minutes in children and 90 minutes in adults.

- **“Deep”** or Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) sleep makes up 75% of our sleep. During deep sleep, muscle blood supply is increased, energy is restored, and essential hormones for growth and development are released.
- **“Light”** or Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep makes up 25% of our sleep. During light sleep, our brains are active and dreaming occurs. Our bodies become still and breathing and heart rates are irregular.



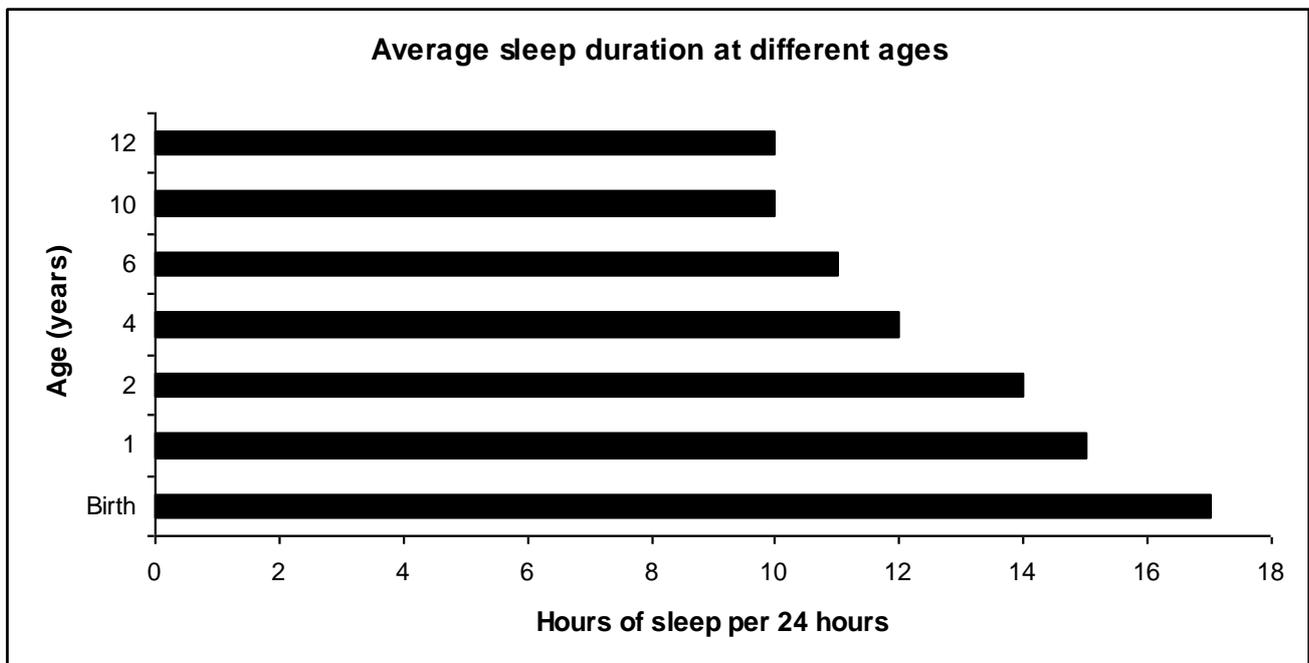
Light and deep sleep cycles



- Children and adults cycle through deep and light sleep throughout the night.
- **All** children wake up from light sleep during the night.
- Waking up overnight is **normal** and is only a problem if your child cannot get back to sleep without your help.

Normal sleep

School-aged children need between 10 and 11 hours of sleep per night. Not getting enough sleep is common in this age group. Common sleep problems in school children include refusing to go to bed, nightmares, delayed sleep, and snoring.



Effects of lack of sleep

- *Emotional*
Lack of sleep may cause your child to be moody, irritable, and cranky. They may have a difficult time controlling their feelings, e.g. they may be frustrated or upset more easily.
- *Behaviour*
School-aged children who do not get enough sleep are more likely to have behaviour problems, such as not being able to concentrate, not doing what is asked of them and being very restless.
- *Thinking and learning*
Lack of sleep may result in problems with paying attention, memory, decision making, reaction time, and creativity, all which are important in school.

