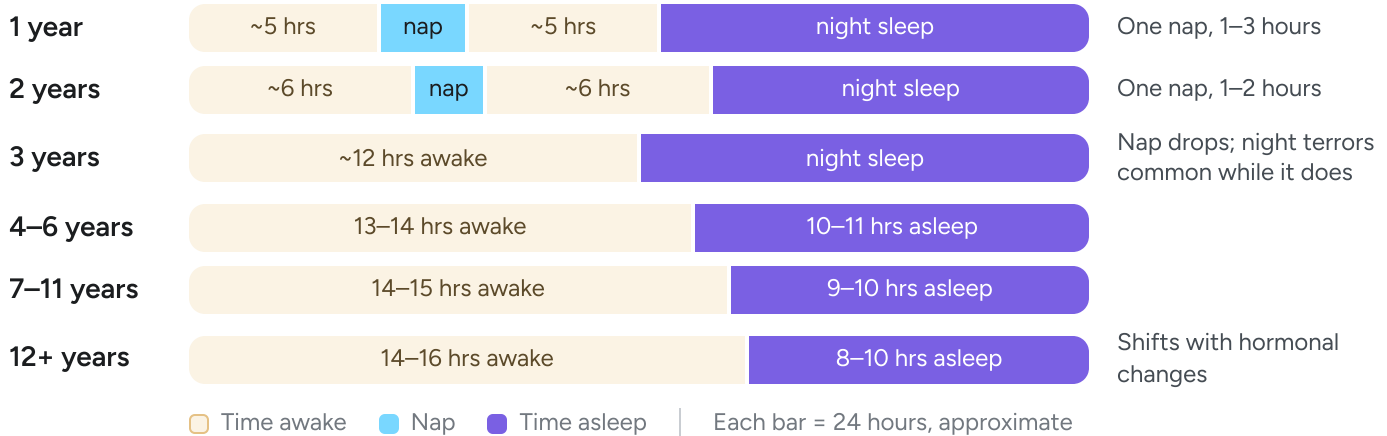


Stabilize the wake–sleep rhythm

Anchor the wake-up time and gauge bedtime from it, at the same time.

01 Age-appropriate sleep needs

How long can this child be awake before sleep is possible — and does their current schedule allow for it?



02 Check the child’s current schedule

What time does the child usually wake up in the morning?

Is there a consistent morning wake-up time?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

What time is the child expected to go to bed?

What time do they end up falling asleep?

03 Figuring out bedtime

- Families don’t always have the correct bedtime targeted for their child’s age and total sleep needs
- Decide on one consistent morning wake-up time, then use the age-appropriate sleep needs (step 1) to set the goal “lights out” time
- Begin the bedtime routine 30–60 minutes before sleep is expected

Example: a 3-year-old with no nap who wakes at 7:30am → bedtime around 7:30pm → routine starts between 6:30 and 7:00pm.

04 Stabilizing the wake–sleep rhythm

Once sleep needs are calculated and the wake-up time and goal lights-out time are set, the family puts the schedule in place.

- Keep one consistent morning wake-up time every day, including weekends, and aim for the goal lights-out time
- The family implements the schedule for up to 5 days
- The clinical team can then quickly tell whether the new schedule is working

Build the bedtime routine

Simple steps, substantial outcomes.

05 Quick check: bedtime routine

Think back to last night and the nights before it. Answer for your client or child.

Question	Yes	No
Is there a bedtime routine every night?	☐	☐
Does it start 30–60 minutes before sleep is expected?	☐	☐
Is the routine made up of calming activities?	☐	☐
Are there any screens or high-energy activities (running, jumping, rough play)?	☐	☐

How to read it: you want Yes, Yes, Yes, No. Any other answer is a place to start.

06 Building a bedtime routine

- About 30–60 minutes from the first step to “lights out”
- Leave out screens and high-energy activities, and swap in calming ones (examples below)
- Same order, same place, every night
- Calming and passive activities, including a warm bath if appropriate
- Every step moves toward the sleep space, and the routine ends there with the child awake
- As sleep needs change, the bedtime routine may change as the child gets older

✓ Calming, fine at bedtime

Rocking, swinging, gliding, massage, deep pressure on joints, “pillow smushes,” “burrito rolls,” pulling/heavy work

✗ Skip at bedtime

Running, jumping, bouncing, crashing, wrestling, “getting the wiggles out,” up-and-down and high-impact movement

Replacement activities

Matching/puzzles, sorting, stacking, drawing/coloring, Wikki Stix, kinetic sand/play-dough, dry beans/rice bin, bead-stringing, stretching/balancing, heel-toe walking, magna-tiles/Legos/blocks, Zingo or similar games, tangrams, cutting/folding

Example routine

Dinner



Warm bath



Pajamas



Teeth



Reading



Bed

WORK ON THEM TOGETHER

The wake–sleep rhythm (page 1) and the bedtime routine (this page) can be worked on at the same time.