

# Zarbee's Naturals:

## NINE STEPS TO A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

### STEP 1: Consistency is Key

Nothing is more important to sleep than a consistent schedule. Whenever possible, keep bedtimes and routines the same across every night of the week. Avoid letting children stay up later and sleep in longer on weekends. The three-hour shift in your child's sleep cycle is like the jet lag felt the morning after a flight from New York to California.

### STEP 2: Create a Sleep Friendly Bedroom

Bedrooms should be dark, quiet, and slightly cool. Get rid of television sets and other bedroom distractions. Avoid using the bedroom for punishments or time-outs. Make it a comfortable place where children can feel safe. You also can equip your child to handle nighttime fears by providing a nightlight, stuffed animals, or flashlight.

### STEP 3: Stick to a Routine

Dedicating 20 to 30 minutes each night to the same bedtime routine allows children the chance to wind down and prepare for sleep. Dim the lights and turn down the volume. Avoid high-energy play too close to bedtime, as it can leave children feeling "wired" for several hours.



### STEP 4: Go "e- free" in the Evening

In our device driven world, it's not enough to just keep the TV off before bedtime. Studies have shown that the light emitted from electronics, including handheld devices, electronic books, and video games, can interfere with normal sleep cycles.

### STEP 5: Teach How to Sleep

It's common for children to wake up in the middle of the night. By allowing your child to fall asleep in her own bed, without you holding her or lying by her side, she will be able to learn to go back to sleep on her own. Check on your child as often as you would like, but the goal is to have your child fall asleep independently.

### STEP 6: Going to Sleep is Not a Game

Many children try to "escape" sleep by calling for parents or leaving their beds. Wait a few seconds to respond and then firmly remind your child that it is time to sleep. Expectations should be communicated, consistent, and enforced.

## STEP 7: Know the Numbers

<b>AGE:</b>	<b>Sleep Need</b>
<b>3-12 months</b>	<b>14 to 15 hours</b>
<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>12 to 14 hours</b>
<b>3-5 years</b>	<b>11 to 13 hours</b>
<b>5-12 years</b>	<b>10 to 11 hours</b>
<b>12-18 years</b>	<b>8 to 9 hours</b>

## STEP 8: Brighten the Day and Stay Active

The morning sun or other bright lights will help shift the timing of your child's natural sleep cycle. Early light exposure will result in earlier evening drowsiness. Daily physical activity will also improve your child's ability to fall and stay asleep.

## STEP 9: No Caffeine for Bedtime Snack

Caffeine should be avoided in children altogether, but especially during 3 to 4 hours before bedtime. A light snack of warm milk and cookies, bananas, or nuts can help relax children.

## Tips for Helping Your Child Sleep Through the Night

According to the National Sleep Foundation, one-third of parents of preschoolers report their child wakes up at least once during the night. In addition, 14 percent of school-aged children wake up at least once during the night (that their parents are aware of).

In addition to the general tips, you can try these strategies:

- Make the bedroom environment the same at bedtime as it is throughout the night (e.g. lights, music)
- Leave your child's room after saying good night.
- Check on your child as often as you like. The goal is to have your child fall asleep independently.
- If your child wakes up in the night, repeat the same "goodnight" steps, leaving your child to fall asleep on their own.

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