



EXERCISE AND SLEEP



Regular exercise plays an important role in helping children sleep well. Movement during the day supports both physical health and better quality sleep at night.

HOW EXERCISE SUPPORTS SLEEP

- Builds sleep pressure: Being active helps the body feel naturally tired by bedtime, making it easier to fall asleep
- Improves sleep quality: Children who are active during the day are more likely to have deeper, more restorative sleep
- Supports the body clock: Daytime movement, especially outdoors, helps regulate natural sleep-wake rhythms
- Reduces restlessness and excess energy: Exercise gives children an outlet for energy, making it easier to settle at night
- Supports mood and emotional regulation: Physical activity can help reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing, which supports better sleep

WHAT COUNTS?

Exercise doesn't need to be structured or intense. It can include:

- Outdoor play (running, climbing, biking)
- Sports or clubs
- Walking to school
- Dancing, jumping, or active games at home



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TIMING

- Daytime is best: Encourage most activity earlier in the day
- Avoid high-energy activity in the 2 hours before bed as it raises body temperature.
- Very active play close to bedtime can make it harder for children to wind down
- Focus on calm activities in the evening: Gentle play, reading, or quiet time helps prepare the body for sleep

HOW MUCH?

Children should aim for plenty of movement throughout the day. As a general guide:

- At least 60 minutes of active play daily is recommended

**Sleep isn't just about what happens at night
-it starts in the daytime.**

A child who has moved, played, and used their energy is much more likely to settle and sleep well.