

Naps

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Rough guide to how much nap time your little one may need

Child's age	Sleep in 24 hours	Nap length	Amount of sleep between last nap and ending and bedtime
18-24 months	11-14	Up to two hours	Up to 6 awake hours before bed
2-2.5 years	10-13	1.5-2 hours	Up to 7 hours awake before bed
2.5-3 years	10-13	1-1.5 hours	May manage the whole day
3+ years	10-13	1-1.5 hours	May manage the whole day

L. Hookway (still awake 2021)

Sleep Pressure

To be able to get any sleep there needs to be so much sleep pressure in the tank. So by looking at the sleep chart you can work out roughly what your child needs. When you look at sleep it needs to be looked at holistically over 24 hours so depending on the age of the child you will want to be ensuring there is enough space from last night to bedtime. If the sleep pressure is too high then your child may fall asleep quickly but wake more frequently. If it is too low then it might take a while for your child to go to sleep at night.

Dropping a nap

Look at the sleep chart and you work out what works for you. Toddlers often need a longer break between their afternoon nap and their nighttime routine to allow pressure to build. Dropping a nap may need to be phased out over days weeks or months. Your child may need to nap every other day.

Instead of completely dropping a nap it may be more gentle to shorten the length of the nap gradually by 15 mins a time and see what works best for you.

Dropping a nap may cause an easier bedtime but **early wake-ups**. This is often because sleep pressure and the circadian rhythm are out of sync. So the body has said "I have had enough sleep" (sleep pressure has gone) but the circadian rhythm says "it's time to get up". If this happens try: a cat nap during the day, gradually change bedtime to a later one or get outside late afternoon to set the body clock.

If your toddler is **waking up cranky from a nap** this may be because they have had too much sleep or because they have not had enough sleep. If it's too much then watch for wake signs when they nap (around 30/40 mins) and then rouse them gently. If too little watch for wake signs and soothe them back to sleep.

The reluctant napper

If you have reviewed all the sleep math and you feel like your little one still needs their naps then:

Try quiet play or snuggle time.

Read books or listen to audiobooks they may just drift off

Lots of physical activity before sleep time so running, jumping, climbing, yoga balls, swimming, football....the list is endless

Make a cave or den some children love feeling snug and safe in cave-like spaces.

Motion can be your friend pushchair, pram, buggy, stroller, baby wearing, car rides, bike rides, or bouncing on a yoga ball.