



# Family Engagement News

## Sleep

### In this issue

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### Survey Data Collection

Information collected for this newsletter was compiled in April 2022. All parents surveyed had completed an application or were enrolled at Upbring School of Arts and Sciences in Central Austin, Texas. Over 120 parents had the opportunity to participate in this survey. There were 31 responses received from parents who attend USAS which include parents of infants, toddlers, preschoolers and Kindergarten-aged children. Some participating families may also have elementary or teenaged children, while alternatively, some may be expecting their first child.

The survey requested that parents share their personal perspective on sleep for themselves and their children. This newsletter shares the results gathered from the survey.

To participate in future survey's or for more information contact:

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## Survey Reveals: Key points for Better Sleep

### PARENTS SLEEP: Key points

- When you get enough rest, it's good for you, your marriage, and your children.
- It can be challenging to get enough sleep.
- You may need to adapt some routines and expectations to get more rest.

### Daily activities that promote sleep:

- When possible, nap during the day, exercise and eat well.

### General Recommendations:

- 1) aim for a regular bedtime routine
- 2) stretch, breath and darken the room
- 3) avoid screens in the bedroom
- 4) settle into bed at the same time each night

*\*\*data collected from parents of USAS*

# Bedtime routines and rituals for children:

*Bedtime routines are a consistent, repetitive set of activities that are carried out before bed every night. They help prepare your child for sleep by having them relax and wind down. A predictable routine also gives your child a sense of security and teaches them how to fall asleep on their own.*

**NOTE:** The following bedtime checklist can be done in any order, however the order shown below was the most common order of events shared by the families surveyed.

<b>A full belly</b>	Whatever the age of your child, feeding them at bedtime (a bottle, a snack, or some cereal) helps them rest longer and have deeper sleep.
<b>Good Hygiene</b>	Practicing the routine of good hygiene and bedtimes helps your child have predictable routines that will lead them to a lifetime of better health. Most of the families surveyed had a routine that included bath time, calming lotion (Chamomile or Jasmine), brushing teeth, and putting on clean, warm pajamas. When children are clean and comfy, they sleep much better than those who are not.
<b>Play</b>	Some families report adding a brief and structured playtime to their bedtime routine. The families mentioned using a timer and keeping play to toys that were calmer like brushing dolls hair, looking at books, or adding to a Lego project. If you chose to add playtime to the bedtime routine, remember to have limits and boundaries in place to help with transitioning to sleep time.
<b>Storytime</b>	Share an adventure from a book, or from your imagination. Collaborate with older children to build a story together. Stories with rhythm or meter are great for children – reading with a calm, quiet and slow pace can help ease your child into dreamland. The benefits of reading to children of all ages are limitless. It can stimulate imagination while expanding their understanding of the world. It helps increase vocabulary, develop language and listening skills and prepares them to understand the written word. Sharing stories with children is one of the best tools that every parent can fit into the day. Bedtimes stories is one of the top routines mentioned by our families in this survey.
<b>Prayers and Songs</b>	Parents lead the way with spiritual development of their young children. This is especially important for reducing stress, or the worry and concerns of life that may be carried over into bedtime leading to nightmares or interrupted sleep. Praying with your child, singing calming songs of peace, is a great way to model how children can calm themselves on nights when they may have additional stress.
<b>Hugs &amp; Kisses</b>	Sharing physical reminders of your love for your child is important for both parent and child. Parents surveyed mentioned including kisses, snuggles, cuddling, rocking, back rubs and massage as ways to boost your child’s connection to last them through the night. Studies have shown that bedtime kisses, cuddles and hugs decrease the stress hormone cortisol in the brain and increases serotonin levels. This brain reaction is similar to meditation and is a great way to help your little ones sleep better.
<b>Sound Machine</b>	White noise machines help people fall asleep and stay asleep by masking background sounds that may disturb sleep. These sounds help train young minds to know when it’s time to sleep.

# When to stop using a baby monitor?

Many parents chose to have an audible or visual baby monitor in the room with their child to help you hear and see your child from a distance. When to turn off the baby monitor? Like most things in life, there are varying opinions.

Generally, it is recommended *by the New York Times, and Huffington Post* that by age 2 or 3 you put away the monitor.

Reasons include:

- The child has fully adjusted to sleeping alone
- The child is aware they are being watched and video technology can interfere with a child's own sense of privacy ...By the time a child is 3, she may have started modifying her behavior because she does not want to be watched playing in a certain way

Removing the monitor **sooner** than 3 years is recommended if...

- Your sleep or sanity is being unnecessarily interrupted as we don't need to hear every little noise the baby makes. In fact, that may make you get in your own way of having your baby sleep through the night. Fussing and crying a little between sleep cycles is very normal and expected, in fact. Go in too quickly and you may even wake your baby up
- Once your baby's old enough to sleep with less frequent night feedings, you may want to stop yourself from rushing to his room whenever he stirs. (Some babies can sleep eight hours without a feeding at 3 months — while others won't do it until their first birthday. Most can sleep around nine or ten hours by 6 months.)
- Frequent visits to your child's room might actually be reinforcing waking and make it harder for your baby to learn to sleep through the night, explains Judith Owens, a pediatrician and director of the Pediatric Sleep Disorders Clinic at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island.

Keeping the monitor **longer** than 3 years is recommended if...

- Monitors can offer anxious parents a much-needed sense of security — especially if the child's bedroom is too far away for the parents to hear a cry during a daytime nap or at night.
- Your child tends to wake up and take risks that need monitoring

## Bedtime: Is my child up too late?

Families at our school shared the times their child go to sleep.

- 7:15 PM Infants
- 7:00 PM Toddlers
- 7:30 PM 2 to 4 years old
- 8:00 PM KinderLab

...family responses from the survey

***100% of families stated there was great value in the structure, and supportive benefits that came from a bedtime routine for their children.***



# Final Thoughts

~by Brenna Nunes

## *Good Night, Malachi*

Malachi was a child that needed extra reassurance and clear boundaries. For Malachi, bedtime meant fear and worry. It was more important than ever that we maintain the same predictable schedule, and bedtime routine to ensure he felt safe at nighttime.

"Where should we meet?" Malachi did not want to be alone at night, so, after bedtime routine of snack, pajamas, story time and prayers we would plan to meet up in dreamland ~ on a mountain top, under the sea, on a train, or in a submarine. Together we

would create an adventure. We would describe the dreamland hideaway place where we would meet, what we would wear, and what we would eat. Once we agreed upon the plan it was time for me to leave his room.

I would ask him, "how do you fall asleep?" And together we would repeat the 4 steps:

*My breathing is slow*

*My body is still*

*My eyes are closed*

*My voice is silent*

He would repeat this to himself after I left. This custom plan helped him for years to fall asleep without fear and anxiety.



Deaconess Brenna Nunes has served Upbring School as the Sr. Director of Admissions, Tuition and Family Engagement since 2017.

Brenna has a degree in Child Studies as well as Master's in Religion with a minor in Psychology.

Brenna parents her teen daughter, provides respite care to Austin area foster parents, and has hosted middle and high school international students.

\*\*\* If you would like more information about Upbring, have a suggestion for a survey topic we would love to hear for you.

\*\*\* If you are a parent of an infant, preschooler or Kindergarten student and would like to participate in future survey's please contact Brenna Nunes.

## Next Issue

- Austin Summers  
Fun in the Sun



Upbring

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