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Wee Beginner (0 – 18 months): How to Get Your Baby to Sleep in Later

Many parents complain that their baby wakes up too early. There are two kinds of early risers; babies who get up before they have had enough sleep, and babies who simply wake up too early for their parents' liking.

Here are some possible causes of early morning waking along with some solutions:

1. A light room: A light room might be the cause of early morning waking. Babies may think "the sky is awake so I'm awake".
2. Some children wake and cry for you, especially if they are not used to sleeping on their own. They are using you as a sleep prop, and are unable to go to sleep and stay asleep on their own. Help them learn to sleep on their own through some sort of sleep training.
3. Your child has an inconsistent or nonexistent sleep routine. A child that has an inconsistent or nonexistent sleep routine does not have consistent internal rhythms to help them know when they should be sleeping and for how long.
4. Morning sounds may be waking your child. If you think this may be going on, try getting up a little earlier than your child and see if you can figure out what is possibly waking them.
5. Your child's nightly requirement of sleep may have already been met. To fix this you may need to either put them to bed later or decrease the length of their naps.
6. Your child may need to eat. Newborns need to eat often. If they don't normally eat at this time they may be in a growth spurt or not eating enough during the day.
7. Morning nap is too early. An early morning nap can cause early morning awakenings by acting as the last sleep cycle of the night, which is separated from the rest of the night by a short wake period. Gradually move morning naptime to later in the morning.

Is your child is uncomfortable:

- Is their clothing itchy?
- Do they have eczema? Try lotion, if that doesn't help then speak to a doctor.
- Is the mattress uncomfortable?
- Is your baby too hot or too cold?
- Are they in pain? Do they have gas? Are they teething? Do they have a diaper rash?

Do they have a wet diaper? Some babies are more sensitive and may do better with diapers that have extra absorption.

<http://bit.ly/2byAKRe> and <http://bit.ly/2c2FXxa>





Wee Explorer (18 months – 3 years): Why is Block Play Important?

Building with blocks provides one of the most valuable learning experiences available for young children. Block play stimulates learning in all domains of development, intellectual, physical, social-emotional and language.

Current research in the Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, the researchers proved that children who play with blocks will do better in math, especially Algebra in middle school.

Toddlers- When toddlers are first introduced to blocks they may learn how to hold them, and feel how heavy they are, they explore the bright colours, and begin to carry them around.

They experiment how blocks may sound when they fall, or when they bang them together. Soon toddlers are learning cause and effect as they are filling and dumping, stacking, knocking down and laying blocks side by side on the floor.

Concepts such as learning sizes, comparing objects by making exact matches and the order of objects are also being learned. Socially, block play contributes to their developing self-confidence, for example as they learn how to stack blocks they are proud of their success and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Through block play a young child's expressive and receptive language is being expanded by learning words such as "fill," "dump," "pick up," "stack," "balance," "tall", and "short."

Three-year olds- Three year olds block play will look different as they move into a simple constructive type of play. A three-year-old usually plays alone or near other children and are beginning to engage in pretend play.

They start building enclosures that resemble zoos, farm pens, roads and castles. They learn concepts such as sorting, ordering, counting, one to one correspondence, size and shape.

What type of environment and materials are needed to encourage block play?

Ideal blocks for block play should be non-interlocking and at least 2 inches by 2 inches. Block play should be set up in an area that is free from other distractions and out of traffic. Accessories such as people, animals and transportation vehicles should also be available to expand play.

<http://www.claytonearlylearning.org/blog/why-is-block-play-important-for-toddlers-and-preschoolers-what-are-they-learning/>





Wee Builder (3 – 4 years): 6 Reasons Your Child Should Play Outside, According to Science.

In decades past, the simple joys of playing outside were something most children took for granted. But between increasingly busy extracurricular schedules and parents' safety concerns, today's children spend less time outdoors than any other generation so far.

Have you ever noticed how much happier your children seem after a few hours spent running around at the park or in the backyard. According to science, that's because they really are happier -- and healthier, too.

Here are just a few of the amazing benefits your children get from playing outside:

1. **Being in nature could improve attention span.** According to one study, spending time in "green" outdoor settings seemed to reduce ADHD symptoms -- inattention and impulsivity -- in children.
2. **And it may reduce stress.** A study by two Cornell University environmental psychologists found that being around nature is a "significant factor" in children's mental and emotional health. Just think how much better a long walk outside makes you feel when you're stressed out!
3. **Sunlight provides essential vitamin D.** The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that a large number of children don't get enough vitamin D. Deficiencies can contribute to everything from bone problems to diabetes to heart disease. Sunlight is a great source of this crucial vitamin – Just remember the sunscreen.
4. **Being outside can even improve eyesight.** Research published in Optometry and Vision Science revealed that children who play outside had better distance vision than children who primarily play inside. Experts think this might have something to do with the pupil constriction that takes place in bright outdoor light.
5. **Dirt helps build a strong immune system.** Not only is it okay for children to get their hands (and everything else) dirty, it's essential: Little ones actually need to be exposed to dirt and germs for their immune systems to develop properly.
6. **Outdoor play prevents obesity.** According to research, children who play outside are more physically active, which not only helps to prevent childhood obesity but also can improve cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and bone density.





Wee Learner (4-5 years): Ways to Help Children Recognize Their Names

As adults recognizing our names is easy. But for a young child who is just beginning to venture out into a classroom, name recognition is a really helpful skill, and many children come to school without it.

Here are five simple ways you can work on this at home with your child:

1. **Use magnet letters.** Use fridge magnets. At this simple stage, we just want the children to recognize that it's their name. If you want to go the extra mile, you could then use the magnets to hold up a photo of your child or maybe a drawing they made.
2. **Label their favourite cups, water bottles, plates, and placemats.** Labeling a few daily items gives your child a chance to see their name in print often and for them to be able to see their name in print frequently
3. **Label artwork.** When your little artist creates artwork have them sign it (scribbling is signing) and then print their name under it with the date. Again this is such a simple thing, but it adds up.
4. **Make bedroom door signs.** These don't have to be fancy; you just need to grab some paper and markers and make a sign with their name.

Children's names are often the very first thing they will read and helping them meet that milestone doesn't have to be anything but fun.

<http://bit.ly/1p5rzZs>

<http://bit.ly/2cqDUqo>





Wee Expert (5-6 years): Numeracy Skills

Numeracy is the ability to apply math concepts in all areas of life.

Numeracy skills involve understanding numbers, counting, solving number problems, measuring, sorting, noticing patterns, adding and subtracting numbers and so on.

We all need numeracy and math skills to do everyday things like:

- solve problems – for example, which brand and size of tinned beans is the cheapest?
- understand patterns – for example, what number would the next house on this street be?
- make choices – for example, which personal loan is the best value?



Here are some suggestions to help your child start learning numeracy skills through everyday play and activities:

- count fingers, toes and toys
- recognize numbers on objects like clocks or remote controls
- Have your child decide how many slices of apple they want.



As your child gets older, they learn more numeracy and maths skills, including size and measurement – for example, when they starts to:

- help set the table, fill a water bottle, divide food into equal shares, compare things of different sizes – ‘big’, ‘small’, use words to describe where things are, such as ‘over’, ‘under’ and ‘next to’, help with the shopping and use money to buy things.



Using numeracy and math language

Language skills and numeracy skills go hand in hand.



Talking with your child about math concepts in your everyday activities will help them understand how and why math is useful. For example, you can point out:

- big and small (size), high and low (height), heavy and light (weight), fast and slow (speed)
- close and far (distance), many and few (amount)
- first, second and third (order)
- morning, afternoon and night (time).

<http://bit.ly/2bVchCL>

<http://bit.ly/2cqGOvg>





Wee Mentor (6+ years): Teaching Your Child How To Get Dressed

Getting dressed is an important skill for children to learn. Often very young children start to be aware of their clothing by pulling off easy-to-remove items such as socks, shoes or hats. Sometimes they try to put them on again. You can build on this early awareness by naming the items of clothing your child has taken off and the body parts those clothes go on.

Why your child needs to learn how to get dressed. The ability to dress yourself builds confidence, independence and a sense of achievement – and once your child has it mastered, it's one less thing for you to do in the morning!

It helps your child develop many other skills, including:

- **Fine motor skills** as they learn to fasten buttons and zips
- **Gross motor skills** as they stand on one leg to pull on a pair of pants
- **Cognitive skills** as they remember what bits of clothing go on first, and builds the patience and attention to finish the task
- **Language** as they name types of clothing, colours and sizes
- **Awareness** of time and space as they learn to dress for certain occasions and weather conditions

Teaching your child how to get dressed. Learning how to get dressed takes patience, persistence and practice from both you and your child. It also involves getting to know the things you have to do to get dressed, like:

- Picking out clothes that are right for the time of day and weather.
- Deciding what to wear – the dinosaur t-shirt or the truck t-shirt today?
- Putting on and taking off clothes and shoes
- Doing up buttons or zips, getting collars and waistbands comfy, and getting socks on the right way around.
- Try to allow a realistic amount of time for getting dressed. If your child needs 20 minutes to dress, don't try to do it in 10 minutes.
- Practice getting dressed when you and your child aren't in a hurry or tired. When you're in a hurry, let your child do the easy tasks and help them with the difficult tasks.
- Talking your child through each step lets them know what to do and includes them in the process. In the early stages, simple words or phrases are OK – for example, 'Shirt on'. You can say more as your child's language develops – for example, 'Push your arm through the sleeve'.





Teaching Your Child How To Get Dressed continued...

Step by step to getting dressed. You can break down each of the steps in getting dressed, depending on your child's skill and age. For example, you could break down the steps for putting on shorts like this:

- Face shorts the right way.
- Hold onto the front of the waistband.
- Push one leg at a time through the leg holes while also holding pants.
- Pull the shorts up.

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/getting_dressed.html/context/358

