

REST TIME

The objective of this policy is to guide the staff and inform parents of the rules concerning the nap and rest period at daycare.

Responsibilities of the parties

Educators:

- Establish a ritual to facilitate a harmonious sleeping climate;
- Be alert to signs of fatigue;
- Ensure the smooth nap and rest period of each child.

Parents:

- Collaborate with educators in order to facilitate a smooth nap or rest period for your child;
- Have a positive attitude towards sleep in general;
- Have a positive attitude for nap and rest period in the afternoon.

Sleep needs

The rest period is an essential moment of the day for all children in the daycare. The benefits of a nap or rest period for children are numerous. Sleep specialists all agree that it is important for the child's physical, intellectual and emotional development.

To meet the needs of the child we must consider that at nap time. There are three separate distinctive realities that are based on the age of the child. In fact, three groups are identified as having different needs for sleep during the day:

- Infants (6 to 18 months +/-) require two naps (one in the morning and early afternoon) and sometimes before the age of 8-9 months in late PM.
- 18 months to 3-4 years require a nap early afternoon.
- 4-5 years need a rest period in early afternoon.

Important reality

The myth that a child deprived of a nap sleeps better at night is false. In fact, excessive fatigue may delay sleep at night, thus increasing deficiency in infant sleep.

Moreover, children that fall asleep quickly because we have cut their nap learn to fall asleep with a high level of exhaustion. Some parents do this to avoid having to establish clear boundaries and enforce them.

The risk that the child develops an insomniac temperament (when the level of fatigue is light to medium) is high. In addition, there is evidence that by asking the child to fight the symptoms of fatigue it imposes a significant stress that makes the child irritable and conditioned to fight sleep, day or night.

Importance of napping

According to pediatricians and sleep specialists, a nap is a practical and indispensable complement to sleep at night. This relaxing beneficial moment allows the children to take a break in the day's activities and gives them several benefits essential to their health and development.

- On a physiological level, while his body sleeps, there will be, among other things; a secretion of growth hormone, waste disposal, strengthening his frame, wound healing and especially the immune activity.
- On an intellectual level, there will be information and memory processing, maturation of central nervous system and emotional development.

Always according to the experts, children 18 months to 5 years need 11 – 14 hours of sleep per day; divided between night and a nap in the afternoon. This allows them to replenish their energy and regain their good mood and concentration to participate in the afternoon activities.

Course of the nap

The period immediately after lunch is the time of day when almost all people have the greatest sleep. The studies confirm that this is not the best time for acquisitions, or for sports activities. For this reason, daily downtime is required for children of all ages.

To meet the needs of the child, educators must have a sleep routine in place; nap time should be positive and not forced. This way, some children will sleep while others remain lying on their mattresses and benefit from this downtime. This allows for smooth running afternoons.

- In the 6 to 18 months groups:
 - The morning nap starts at about 8h30 and lasts 1 ½ hours, until 10:00. The duration of the morning nap starts to decrease gradually at the age of 14 months.
 - The afternoon naps start at about 12:30 and lasts 2.5 hours, or until 3pm.
 - For safety reasons (choking) and to avoid bad habits, no bottle will be used to put the baby to sleep. The children who want to drink will do so in a sitting or semi-sitting position before sleep time.
- 18 months to 3-4 years:
 - The nap starts at about 12:30pm and lasts 2.5 hours, until 3pm. The duration of the nap tends to decrease slightly in 3-4 years, but they remain on their mattresses until the end of the nap. Educators can leave a book near, so they do not disturb other children in the group.
- 4-5 years:
 - Towards the end of the year the rest period begins approximately at 1pm for a mandatory period of 45 minutes. Because the need for day sleep is less and to prepare them for entering school, children who do not sleep will be allowed to take a book, while remaining on the mattress, then they will be invited to get up for quiet activities. If the child falls asleep, we will let him wake up on his own. If the child continues his nap beyond 90 minutes, he can be woken up gently so as not to disturb him. The parent will be notified that the excessiveness for sleep of her child may be due to a lack of night sleep.

For all these reasons and for the sole purpose of promoting the welfare of the child, a rest time is part of the children's day. Parents cannot demand that their children not nap or not participate in the rest period. In addition, no child will be awakened before the end of nap time at the request of parents. Children must be woken up no later than 3pm for it not to interfere with nighttime sleep.

Sleep habits

Small personal sleep habits of children, Ex: rocking, swaying in rhythm, twisting a lock of hair with their hands, snuggling with blanket, etc....; if it is safe, hygienic and non-disruptive to other children it is permitted. Undesirable habits, such as those that prevent the child from learning to fall asleep alone, will be worked on in a collaborative way with educators to bring the child to gradually abandon the habits in question and to make new ones that make it easier to fall asleep.

Collaboration of parents and educators

Educators must communicate to parents all special problems that arise during the child's period of nap or rest: nervousness, change in sleep patterns, unusual crying, signs of early sleep, etc... Parents and educators will help each other identify the causes and find solutions.

Parents who have difficulty with sleep with their child at home may discuss with educators any possible solutions. However, all children without exception are subject to this policy. Educational leadership remains available to support educators and parents to document and support them in finding solutions when they encounter difficulties with their child's sleep.

Sites to visit

www.brigitteangevin.com *Brigitte Langevin is the author of the book Comment aider mon enfant à mieux dormir. In addition to providing information on children's sleep on her site, Ms. Langevin offers parents telephone and home consultations.*