

3 simple steps for a better bedtime routine

Healthy habits start at home—and it can be as simple as a bedtime routine. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends an easy formula: Brush, Book, Bed—a calming routine that combines teeth brushing, reading and sleep.



Scan for more information, services and resources.

Step 1 Brush

Help your child brush each night before bed—the last thing to touch their teeth should be a tooth brush, not a bottle, cup or snack.

You can start even before the first tooth appears:

- Gently wipe gums with a clean, soft cloth.
- Once teeth come in, brush twice daily with a small amount of age-appropriate toothpaste.
- As your child grows, let them practice brushing while you supervise.

Step 2 Book

Reading at bedtime does more than help your child wind down—it builds early literacy, strengthens your bond and supports brain development.

Just a few minutes each night can:

- Grow vocabulary
- Support school readiness
- Create calm, connected moments

You don't need a large collection. Your local library, book swaps and community programs are great places to start.

Step 3 Bed

A consistent bedtime routine helps children feel safe and supports healthy sleep—key for growth, learning and family well-being.

When bedtime is around the same time each night, children are more likely to:

- Fall asleep faster
- Stay asleep longer
- Wake up rested

Simple steps like turning off screens and dimming lights can make a big difference.

Healthy routines build happy families

Healthy teeth and healthy routines go hand in hand. Using **Brush, Book, Bed** each night supports your child's language, learning and sleep—all at once.

For extra help, download printable tools from the American Academy of Pediatrics to post at home or share with caregivers.

You're not alone. Visit the AZ Parenting Guide for trusted tips, or call/text the Birth to 5 Helpline (877-705-KIDS) with questions about your child's growth, behavior or routines.



Small bedtime steps can lead to big benefits—now and for years to come.