

Naptime

Preschool children usually need some amount of rest during the day to provide downtime for their bodies to rejuvenate. On average, preschool children (3 to 5 years) sleep 10-12 hours at night in addition to approximately a one-hour nap in the afternoon. Children's nap schedules may vary depending on age or individual needs.

A naptime routine should be established in preschool from the beginning of the school year, with a time to rest usually after lunch. Teachers should go through a similar routine every day for children to understand what is expected of them so they can feel safe and secure. There must be "at least one alert staff member always in the room" for sufficient supervision (Harms et al., 1998). The Division of Early Childhood Education, NJ Department of Education, supports the below citation from the Manual Requirements for Child Care Centers, NJ Department of Human Services, as the Abbott nap time student/ratio protocol:

- 10:122-4.3
- At least one staff member shall be physically present in the room or area in which children are napping and shall be able to summon other staff members without leaving the room or area

Based on the Early Childhood Environmental Scale-Revised (1998), provisions should be made for children who are early risers, late sleepers, or who do not need a nap (e.g., books or puzzles). Unless a child routinely becomes irritable and overtired from lack of sleep, a nap should not be forced upon a child (Shelov, 1993). The naptime environment should be calming with soft music and dim lights with cots at least 3 feet apart. Cots should be stored in an accessible location with personal bedding separated to maintain sanitary conditions.

References

Berk, L., (1999). *Infants and children, prenatal through middle childhood* (third edition). Illinois State University: Allyn and Bacon.

Harms, T., & Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (1998). *Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised*. Teacher's College Press: Williston, VT.

New Jersey Department of Human Services, Manual Requirements for Child Care Centers.

Shelov, S.P. (1993). *Caring for your baby and young child: Birth to age 5*. New York: Bantam.