

What is Developmentally Appropriate at Rest Time

What do you call your rest time? Does the name create expectations, anxieties, apprehension or welcome? Do you call it nap, do the children all have to sleep?

The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R) states that programs should have a rest time if the program is more than four hours long. The scheduling should be appropriate; not too late or too long. There should be a maximum of 2 1/2 hours of rest time and it should be at a regular time every day. If the child doesn't actually sleep, take into consideration how long it takes a child to go to sleep (15-20 is normal for a child to settle and sleep). Cots need to be a minimum 18 inches apart and to meet high standards 36 inches apart is recommended unless separated by a barrier. Cots need to be properly stored and sanitized. There needs to be supervision to meet ratio requirements according to age. The room needs to be conducive to rest with low lights or soft music.

Preschoolers need about 11-13 hours of sleep. This may include a rest time during the day. It's important that you speak to parents about their child's sleep patterns, such as bedtime, what is their bedtime routine and how much sleep they normally receive. This will also explain why some children sleep at school or not.



Alternatives for Children who don't sleep during the rest/nap time of the day:

- Baggies of materials created by the staff for individual children that focus on information gathered from the assessment for that child (The child could remain on their mats if that worked best).
- As a family project, the child and the family could fill/place in a shoe box items the child could engage with during this time. (The child could/might remain on their mats during this time.) Occasionally, the child could take the box home and change out the items in the box then bring it back to the center.
- "Special" helpers could be given quiet jobs to help the teacher with during this time.
- If clay and play dough were not always available during choice time, children could engage in play with those materials during this time.
- As a family project, families can read stories onto tapes which are then sent to the center and using headphones, children can listen to the stories as they follow along with the books (on their mats).
- If staffing patterns allow, children and teachers could go outside for some quiet play choices. Quiet table top activities such as puzzles, beading, lacing, sorting, etc.

