Healthy Children, Healthy State:

Child Sleep in Texas

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

TEXAS CHILDREN DO NOT GET SUFFICIENT SLEEP

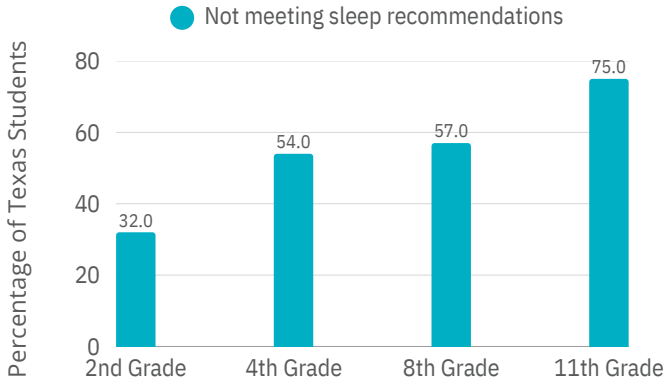
Healthy sleep is critical for children and adolescents to grow and develop physically, psychosocially, and cognitively.[1] Insufficient sleep at night is associated with poor academic performance and various adverse health consequences.[1]

Texas children do not meet sleep recommendations

43% of Texas children and adolescents sleep less than 8 hours per night.

80% of Texas children and adolescents have electronic devices (TV, laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.) in the room where they sleep.

Students NOT meeting sleep recommendations increases with grade level:



The percentage of students NOT meeting sleep recommendations varies by where students live.

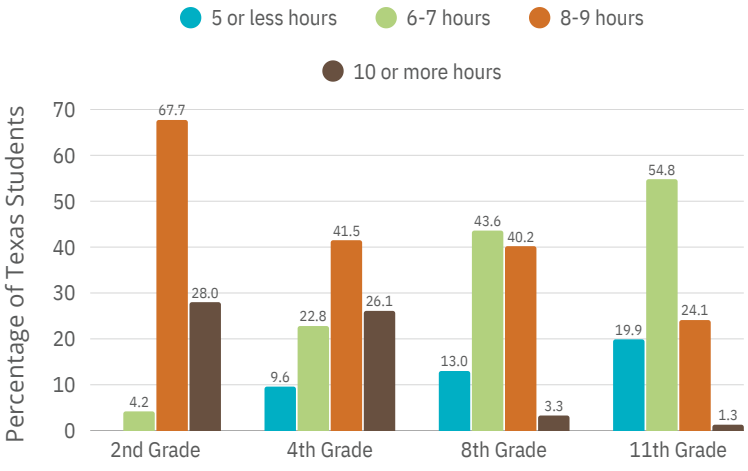
- Texas/Mexico border vs. non-border counties
  - **44%** vs. **32%** in grade 2
  - **64%** vs. **57%** in grade 4

Why Sleep Matters

Not meeting sleep recommendations is associated with adverse health outcomes in children, including:[2,3]

- increased risk for injuries and accidents
- increased risk of overweight and obesity
- increased risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases
- increased risk of depression
- increased risk of attention and behavioral problems
- poorer diet quality and increased soft drink consumption

Hours of sleep on a school night



UTHealth Houston School of Public Health | Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

How to promote healthy sleep in Texas children

Parents can help their children develop healthy sleep habits and ensure children get enough sleep for their age. [4, 5, 7-9]

- Follow a consistent bedtime and wake time schedule and routine, even on weekends.
- Remove electronic devices such as TVs, computers, and tablets from the child's bedroom.
- Limit screen time before bed.
- Provide a comfortable bed and keep the bedroom quiet, dark, and cool.
- Encourage children to fall asleep independently.
- Encourage a healthy diet and limit caffeinated beverage consumption.
- Encourage children to have regular vigorous exercise during the day.
- Ensure children are exposed to bright light in the morning.
- Manage children's sleep problems with health care professionals.

Policy recommendations for children's sleep health. [7, 10]

- Delay school start times to ensure students have sufficient sleep duration and better sleep quality.
- Include sleep education in the K-12 curriculum to help children learn the importance of sleep.
- Provide parent education to improve parent knowledge and awareness of child sleep.

Current Sleep Guidelines

During a 24-hour period, the recommended sleep duration, minimum and maximum hours, varies by age: [2,6]

- Infants 4-12 months: 12-16 hours of sleep, including naps.
- Children 1-2 years of age: 11-14 hours of sleep, including naps.
- Children 3-5 years of age: 10-13 hours of sleep, including naps.
- Children 6-12 years of age: 9-12 hours of sleep.
- Children 13-18 years of age: 8-10 hours of sleep.

References

1. Liu, J., Ji, X., Pitt, S., Wang, G., Rovit, E., Lipman, T., & Jiang, F. (2022). Childhood sleep: Physical, cognitive, and behavioral consequences and implications. World Journal of Pediatrics, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12519-022-00647-w
2. Paruthi, S., Brooks, L. J., D'Ambrosio, C., Hall, W. A., Kotagal, S., Lloyd, R. M., Malow, B. A., Maski, K., Nichols, C., Quan, S. F., Rosen, C. L., Troester, M. M., & Wise, M. S. (2016). Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations: A Consensus Statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine, 12(06), 785–786.
3. Hermes, F. N., Nunes, E. E. M., & de Melo, C. M. (n.d.). Sleep, nutritional status and eating behavior in children: A review study. Revista Paulista de Pediatria, 40, e2020479. https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-0462/2022/40/2020479IN
4. Robards, K. (2021, April 28). Healthy sleep is vital to children's well-being. Sleep Education. https://sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep-vital-childrens-well-being/
5. Williamson, A. A. (2024). How Should Clinicians Partner With Families to Promote Children's Sleep Health? AMA Journal of Ethics, 26(10), 755–762. https://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2024.755
6. Jenco, M., & Editor, N. C. (n.d.). AAP endorses new recommendations on sleep times. Retrieved March 11, 2025, from https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/6630/AAP-endorses-new-recommendations-on-sleep-times
7. CDC. (2025, February 13). Sleep and Health. Physical Education and Physical Activity. https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-education/staying-healthy/sleep.html
8. Bathory, E., & Tomopoulos, S. (2017). Sleep Regulation, Physiology and Development, Sleep Duration and Patterns, and Sleep Hygiene in Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool-Age Children. Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care, 47(2), 29–42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cppeds.2016.12.001
9. Allen, S. L., Howlett, M. D., Coulombe, J. A., & Corkum, P. V. (2016). ABCs of SLEEPING: A review of the evidence behind pediatric sleep practice recommendations. Sleep Medicine Reviews, 29, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smrv.2015.08.006
10. Bonuck, K., Collins-Anderson, A., Schechter, C. B., Felt, B. T., & Chervin, R. D. (2022). Effects of a Sleep Health Education Program for Children and Parents on Child Sleep Duration and Difficulties. JAMA Network Open, 5(7), e2223692. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.23692

About: Texas Child Health Status Report

These reports utilize state-level data from the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (Texas SPAN) Project 2021-2023 to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth

Last Updated August 4, 2025.

Suggested Citation

Zhang Y, Malkani R, Handler K, Menendez T, Flores-Thorpe S, Smith CL, Berry JL, Hoelscher DM. Child sleep in Texas. A report of the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition Project. UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin, Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. Published August 4, 2025.

UTHealth Houston School of Public Health | Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services