

Your 18-month-old's sleep

Personalized guide · sleep rhythm, challenges, schedule and tips for this stage

AWAKE TIME

5 h – 6 h

NAPS PER DAY

1

TOTAL SLEEP / 24 H

11–14 h

NIGHT · NAPS

11 h · 2–3 h

What's happening with sleep now

Your toddler is now firmly in one-nap territory: a single midday sleep, usually settling after lunch around 12:30 to 1:00 and lasting roughly 60 to 90 minutes or more. Wake windows have grown long, stretching up to about 5 to 6 hours, which is why the day now hangs on that one restorative nap. Total sleep still lands around 11 to 14 hours a day, typically about 11 hours at night with 2 to 3 hours of daytime sleep.

These months also bring the 18-month regression, which many parents find the most stubborn of all. The difference now is that your toddler is old enough to actively protest: they can climb, call out, negotiate, and hold an opinion about bedtime. Underneath it is a burst of autonomy and limit-testing, a peak in separation feelings, and often the discomfort of molars pushing through, all landing at once.

The antidote to this stage isn't a new trick, it's the same warm routine held steady. Toddlers testing limits are actually looking for the reassurance of where the edges are, so calm consistency tells them the boundary is safe and dependable. Warmth and firmness aren't opposites here: a predictable wind-down and a loving but unwavering bedtime give your toddler exactly the security they're reaching for.

A sample day

7:00 wake-up

7:00 AM

Wake up

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Nap 1

8:00 PM

Bedtime 

If they wake at 6:00

6:00 AM

Wake up

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Nap 1

8:00 PM

Bedtime 

Common challenges — and what helps

Bedtime battles and stalling: your toddler drags out the routine, asks for one more of everything, pops back up, or protests being left, testing whether the limits really hold.

Keep a rock-solid, predictable bedtime routine every night so the sequence itself signals sleep. Set calm, firm boundaries and offer controlled choices within them ('the blue pyjamas or the green ones?', not 'do you want to go to bed?') so your toddler feels agency without the boundary moving. Stay warm and matter-of-fact through the protest rather than bargaining.

Nap refusal: your toddler fights the midday nap and you wonder if it's time to drop it, even though skipping it leaves them frazzled by late afternoon.

Don't drop the nap. Most toddlers genuinely need it until around age three, and refusal during a regression is protest, not readiness. Keep offering it at the same after-lunch anchor, and if the nap truly doesn't happen, protect the day with quiet time in the cot or a calm, restful pause, then bring bedtime earlier so they don't tip into overtired.

Early waking returns, with your toddler up before the day should really start, often overtired and cranky rather than well-rested.

Keep the room dark and mornings low-key so the day doesn't begin at the first stir. Because overtiredness tends to drive early waking, guard against it by holding the midday nap and using an earlier bedtime whenever the nap falls short. Give any schedule change a steady week or two before deciding it isn't working.

What's coming next

Once the regression passes, your toddler settles into the long, stable one-nap stretch that typically carries all the way to around age three. The most important thing to hold onto is that the midday nap is kept, not dropped, even through the protest phases that come and go. If sleep or mood concerns feel out of the ordinary or persistent, check in with your pediatrician.

What helps most right now

- 🌙 Protect the one midday nap after lunch and keep offering it at the same time, even during protest phases, since most toddlers need it until around age three.
- 🌙 Hold a calm, unwavering bedtime routine and offer controlled choices within firm boundaries so your toddler feels agency without the limit moving.
- 🌙 Use an earlier bedtime as your reliable rescue on days the nap is short or skipped, so an off day doesn't snowball into overtiredness.
- 🌙 Keep the sleep space safe and boring: a clear cot or toddler bed with no loose or hazardous items, and consult your pediatrician about any persistent concerns.

Safe sleep

Toddler safe sleep: keep the mattress firm and the space simple. As soon as they start **climbing the rail**, drop the base to its lowest setting or move to a toddler/floor bed to prevent falls, and keep cords and blind pulls out of reach. A small comforter or lovey is generally fine at this age, but keep the cot clear of large objects.

When to check with your pediatrician

When to check with your pediatrician: sleep varies a lot from baby to baby, but do mention it to your doctor if you notice **loud snoring, pauses in breathing, or very laboured breathing**, if your baby isn't gaining weight or is feeding poorly, if they consistently sleep far less (or more) than expected and seem unhappy or unusually drowsy, or if anything about their development worries you. This guide is general guidance and not a substitute for medical advice.

And tomorrow, and next month?

This guide is the average for their age. The **Nana** app learns your baby's real rhythm and adjusts naps and bedtime every day. Free to start → nanababy.app · Also online: <https://nanababy.app/18-month-old-sleep-schedule/>