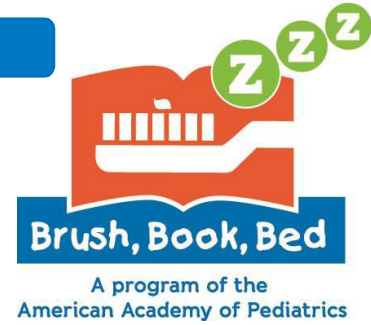


# How to Structure Your Child's Nighttime Routine

KIDS LOVE ROUTINES – BRUSH, BOOK, BED!

**Brush, Book, Bed** is a program of the American Academy of Pediatrics to help parents develop healthy nighttime routines. Start your routine every night at the same time, 30 minutes before bedtime so that you have enough time to brush teeth, read together, and go to sleep. For tips on what should be included in this routine visit [www.HealthyChildren.org/BrushBookBed](http://www.HealthyChildren.org/BrushBookBed).



## Brush

Each night help your children to brush their teeth.

- **From birth:** Use a soft washcloth to wipe your baby's gums after feedings and don't put babies in bed with a bottle of milk or juice. Avoid sharing items with your baby that have been in your own mouth. Once moving on to solids, choose foods that are less likely to cause cavities and limit sugary and sticky foods.
- **Under 3:** As soon as you can see any teeth, you can start to brush! Brush two times a day with a smear (grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste.
- **3 – 6:** Brush two times a day with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. It's okay to let your child practice brushing, but they need your help to do the best job! Put the right amount of toothpaste on the brush for them and brush their teeth, being sure you reach all sides and their tongue. It's also okay to let them practice on their own first! Once teeth touch, they should also be flossed.
- **Always:** Limit sugary foods and drinks to only at mealtimes. Limit juice to only 1 glass a day and only 100% juice (for children over age 1). Between meals, encourage them to drink only water. Fluoridated water is best. **Start going to the dentist by age 1, and go two times a year going forward.**

## Book

After you have brushed your children's teeth, it's time to read!

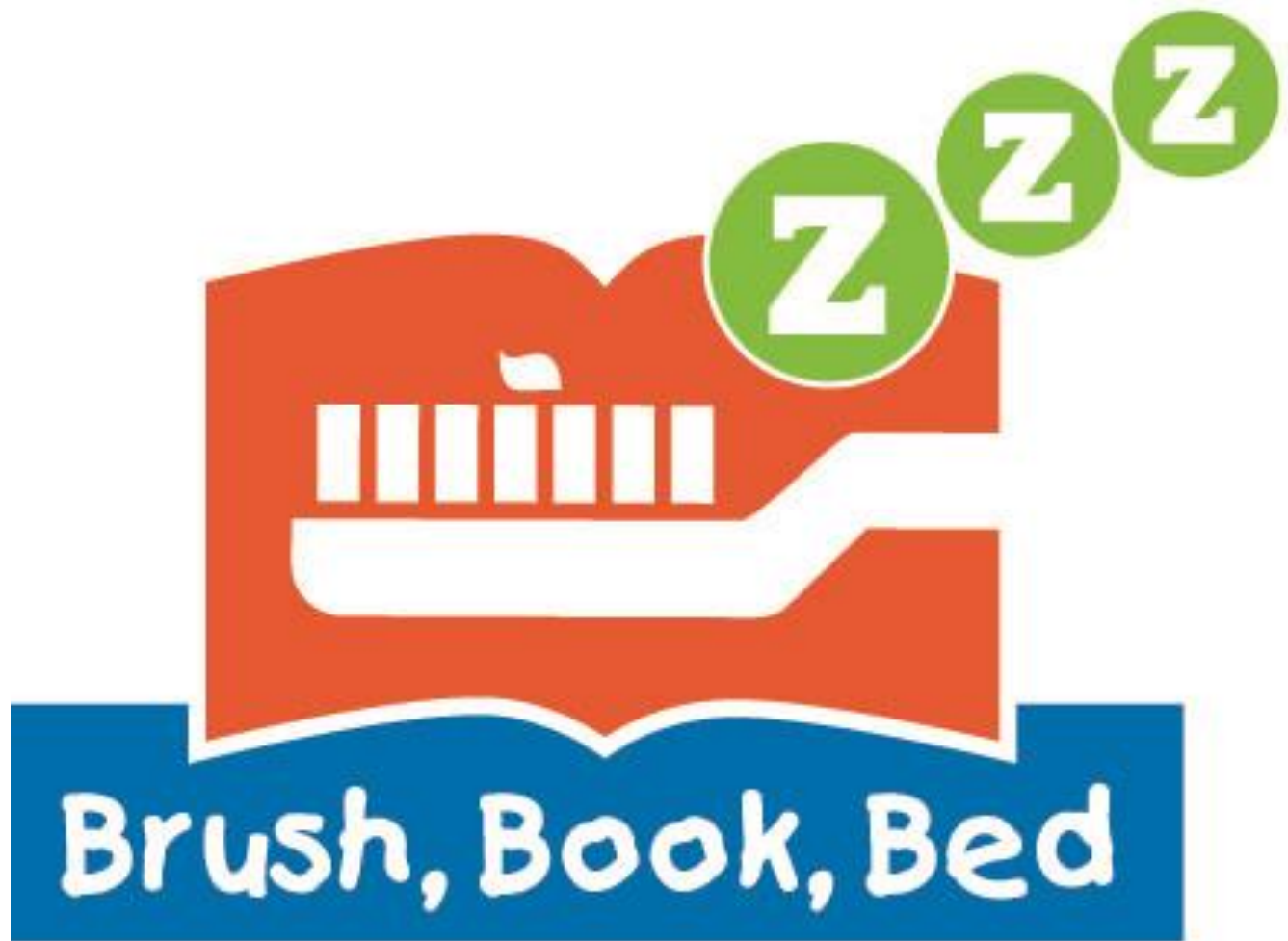
- Children **love to hear your voice** – sing, talk, and read aloud as much as possible.
- **Name and point to things** in pictures of books. As they get older (12-18 months), ask them questions as you read a book. *"Where's the puppy?"* or *"What color is the ball?"*
- **Act out the story** or pictures with your face, hands, and voice.
- **Babies love sturdy books with pictures and rhymes.** It's okay if they chew the book! It is how babies explore the world around them.
- Let **your child pick out a book** (or two!) to read. This encourages healthy independence.
- **Read stories everyday** but let your child decide how long you read.



## Bed

After brushing teeth and reading together, it is time to go to bed.

- **Make daytime playtime.** Talking and playing with your children during the day will help them sleep for longer periods during the night.
- Put your children to bed when drowsy, but awake. This teaches them to **fall asleep on their own** from being awake.
- Babies should **sleep on their backs** without pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals in the crib. Babies should not share a sleep surface with a parent. The safest place for them is in a crib in a parent's room.
- When your baby fusses during the night, **wait a few minutes.** See if she can fall asleep on her own, if not, check on her.
- **Keep your baby calm and quiet** during nighttime feedings or changings.
- When your older child awakes in the night, first place a stuffed animal or blanket in his bed to help him to learn how to console himself. Before age one, stuffed animals and blankets should not be placed in the bed with the baby.



**A program of the  
American Academy of Pediatrics**

Implementation Guide

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For more information email [oralhealth@aap.org](mailto:oralhealth@aap.org) or visit  
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Oral-Health/Pages/Brush-Book-Bed.aspx>