

# Bedtime rules make for better teen sleep, finds Australian study

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Parents setting bedtime rules can be "protective" of their teenage children's health and well-being, helping them to establish good sleep routines as young adults and in the future, say Flinders University

researchers.

Using feedback from 2,500 students aged from 12 to 14 between 2019 and 2020, the national study found adolescents whose parents set bedtimes had at least 20 minutes more [sleep](#) on average which can make "all the difference" to next-day performance—including reaching the recommended 8–10 hours of sleep a night.

The adolescent sleep researchers at Flinders University are now seeking 30 participants for a new study in Adelaide to record their self-monitored sleep overnight, using [electronic devices](#) and other factors to find out more about teen sleep habits.

"Most [young people](#) tend to stay up later and have less sleep when they are left to set their own bedtimes, but qualitative research is finding that adolescents are open to parental guidance to improve their sleep patterns," says psychology researcher Dr. Serena Bauducco, a visiting scholar from Sweden.

"In our [national study](#) we also found some adolescents were happy to have parent reintroduce bedtime setting after a period of having no bedtime rules," adds Bauducco, who says holding on to bedtime rules seems to slow down the natural trend towards later bedtimes and shorter sleep duration seen throughout adolescence.

The study, published in the *Journal of Sleep Research*, supports a growing body of research supporting the positive impact of parent-set bedtimes on [adolescents'](#) sleep. Teenagers need between eight and 10 hours of sleep per night.

It not only shows sleep interventions help to maintain positive sleep routines but also can reintroduce bedtimes rules in mid-adolescence, paving the way for sleep gains in teenagers at an age when school-based

sleep education and other awareness programs are seeking to improve sleep health.

"We therefore encourage public health recommendations to highlight the beneficial effects of maintaining bedtime rules into adolescence."

**More information:** S. V. Bauducco et al, It's past your bedtime, but does it matter anymore? How longitudinal changes in bedtime rules relate to adolescents' sleep, *Journal of Sleep Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/jsr.13940](https://doi.org/10.1111/jsr.13940)

Provided by Flinders University

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