



Brush, Book, Bed

How to structure your child's
nighttime routine

A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics

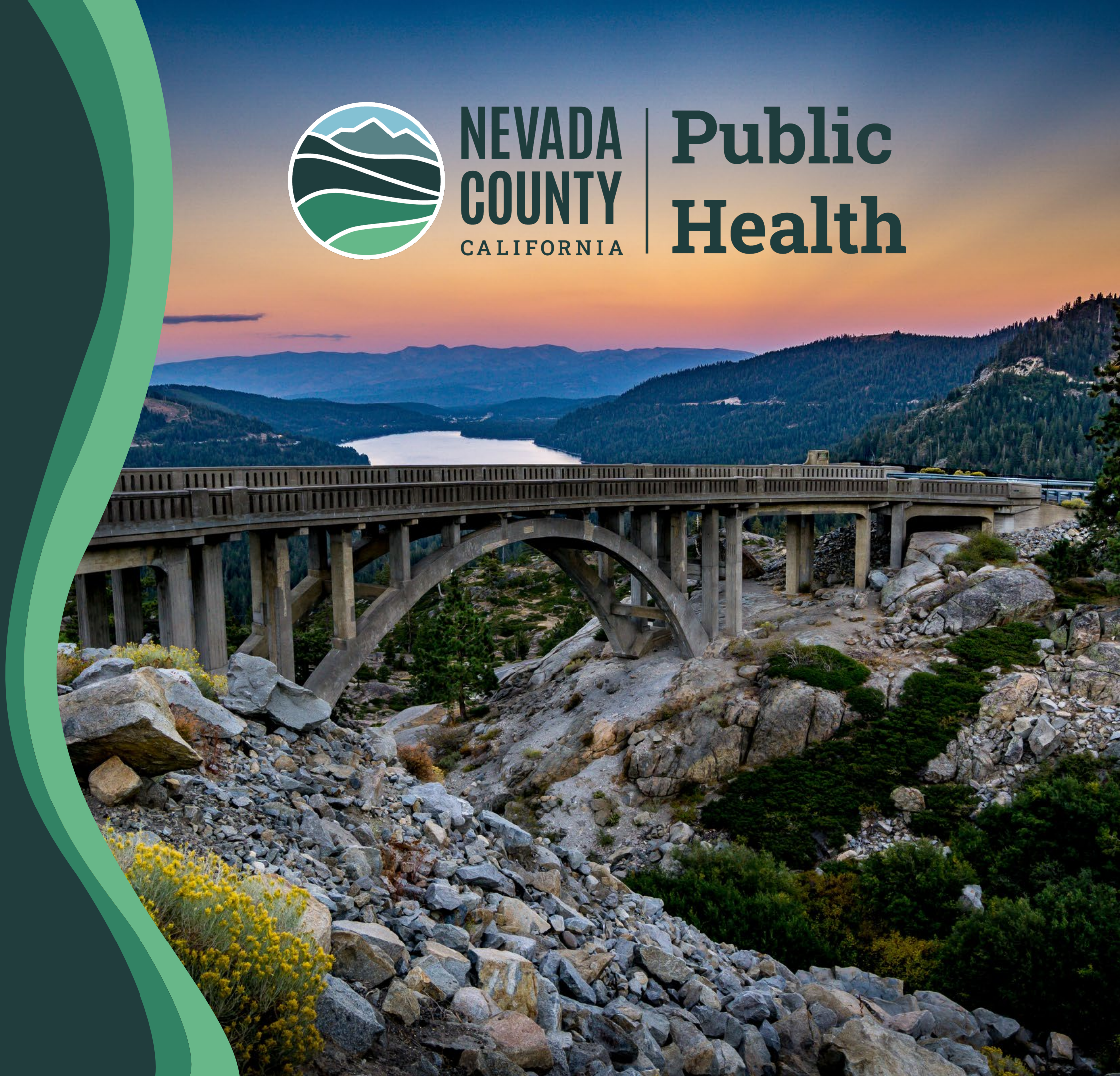


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Learning Objectives

- Understand why predictable bedtime routines support healthy sleep, behavior, and development.
- Learn the three parts of the Brush, Book, Bed routine.
- Know how to brush a young child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste.
- Feel confident using books to support early literacy, bonding, and calm bedtime transitions.
- Create a personalized bedtime routine for their child.



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Which expression best describes your current bedtime routine?



Parents often mention how bedtime can feel rushed and stressful. The goal of this presentation is to provide useful tools to establish a healthy bedtime routine while also creating important oral health habits to keep your child healthy.

Why Bedtime Matters?

- Routines help children feel safe and calm.
- Predictable schedules improve sleep and reduce nighttime waking.
- Sleep supports growth, learning, behavior, and emotional regulation.
- Establishing routines early helps long-term habits.



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Materials



- Children's age-appropriate toothbrush (or cloth)
- Fluoride Toothpaste
- Age-appropriate children's books
- The Brush, Book, Bed routine



Always use a clean cloth for the baby's gums and mouth.

Toothbrush Timeline



0-3 years old

Finger slip toothbrush,
rice-sized toothpaste.

3-5 years old

Kid-sized toothbrush,
rice-sized toothpaste.



6-9 years old

Kid-sized toothbrush,
pea-sized toothpaste.

10 years +

Adult toothbrush
pea-sized toothpaste.



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This simple, 3-step routine helps make bedtime cozy, predictable, and healthy.

Brush

- Brush teeth **twice a day**, especially before bed.
- Use a **tiny smear** of fluoride toothpaste for children under 3, **pea-size** amount for age 3+.
- Caregivers should help children brush until around age 8.
- Avoid giving food or sugary drinks right after brushing.

Please view this video to learn more about how to clean your baby or toddler's teeth so that they can keep their smiles healthy.



[You're Probably Brushing Your Kids' Teeth Wrong \(Do This For Toddler and Baby Teeth\)](#)

Book: Reading Together

- Reading promotes language, bonding, and school readiness.
- Only 2–5 minutes of reading is enough to signal “bedtime.”
- Babies and toddlers learn through pictures, pointing, and naming.
- The goal isn’t finishing a book — it’s connection.

Sample Activity:

Practice “interactive reading” by pointing out pictures, describing actions, or asking simple questions.



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Bed: The Sleep Routine

- After brushing and reading, caregivers place the child in bed drowsy but awake.
- Keep the environment calm: dim lights, quiet, simple routines.
- Repeat it nightly — consistency matters more than perfection.
- Avoid screens at least **1 hour before bed**.

Sample routine:

Bath → Pajamas → **Brush** → **Book** → **Bed**



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Considerations



- What time do you want bedtime to start?
- What calms your child?
- Which parts of your current routine already work well?
- What simple 3-to-5 step routine can you commit to?
- What small changes can you start tonight?

Brush, Book, Bed is meant to be simple. Even if evenings get messy, using these three steps regularly will help your child stay healthy and feel secure.

[Brush, Book, Bed: How to Structure Your Child's Nighttime Routine - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/Parents/Bedtime/Brush-Book-Bed/)

Thank you

Visit SmileNevadaCounty.com for oral health resources and education

This presentation was created by The
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