



# Night-Night

**Y**es, yes, daytime naps are important for toddlers. But a new Canadian study finds that it's nighttime zzz's that are most necessary for developing self-control, memory, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Makes sense, says Kira Ryan, co-founder of Dream Team Baby Sleep Consulting, a company that counsels parents on sleep issues: "Nighttime sleep is when the most prolonged stages of REM and deep sleep happen, allowing the brain to process basic functions." To help ensure your peanut gets the most night-night possible, follow these three rules:

## RULE #1: GET THE TIMING RIGHT

Toddlers should be hitting the sack between 6 and 8 P.M., and sleeping 11 to 12 hours a night. If your tot is nowhere near this schedule, try making gradual changes to his routine.

## RULE #2: WAKE LATE-NAPPERS

"Your toddler should be up from his afternoon nap for three to four hours before bedtime to make sure he's tired, but not exhausted, when it's time to turn out the lights," says Ryan.

## RULE #3: DON'T RUSH THE TODDLER BED

"It's best to keep children in their cribs until two and a half or three years of age," says Ryan. "If a toddler is able to move around his room, sleep can be more challenging." —H.P.

BOTTOM: ALEXANDER SHALAMOV/VEER