

SLEEP

A good night's sleep is important for children and their carers. Sleepless or disturbed nights over a prolonged period can be difficult to manage. Children vary in the amount of sleep they need but a good night's sleep is essential for general wellbeing. Children with specific conditions may need more or less than is typical. Some children with additional needs may need a little extra help and support to establish a good night time routine.



TOP TIPS TO PROMOTE GOOD SLEEP

1. Having a consistent bedtime routine every night helps signal to children that it's time to wind down and relax.
2. Ensure the routine is calm and gentle. Half an hour before bedtime do quiet activities together, turn the television and/or technology off, have a warm bath, a cuddle and share a story.
3. For some children, a picture strip showing what happens at bedtime may help them to get used to the routines. Pictures can be removed as stages are completed.
4. Avoid fizzy, sugary or caffeine drinks such as cola drinks and large amounts of food before bedtime.
5. Try to make sure your child has had some physical activity or time outdoors (where possible) during the daytime.
6. Sharing a story with your child is one of the most important activities you can do with them. Choose books that your child enjoys and share special time looking at the pictures and talking about the story.
7. Ensure your child's bedroom is welcoming and comfortable and somewhere your child is happy to go. Try to create a calm environment.
8. Dim or turn lights off so that your child knows it is time to go to sleep. Blackout curtains can be used to ensure a darkened room. Some children find a special night light reassuring. When it is time to leave, give them a kiss and say goodnight.
9. Avoid letting children fall asleep downstairs or in your bed. It is important to get children used to falling asleep in their own beds in order that both you and your child get a good night's rest.
10. Some children wake up in the night. When they get up, return them to their bed after you have made sure that they do not need the toilet or a nappy change. Keep conversation to a minimum. You may have to repeat this process several times.

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