

# SLEEP TIPS



Create a strong bedtime routine and try to stick to the same bedtime/wakeup time each day...even on weekends! The routine will help their body know when to sleep/wake up. A new routine will take at least 2 weeks to adapt to.

Choose a realistic bedtime for your child, too early and they will still have a lot of energy, too late and they will be overtired.

A warm bath can help your child relax and get ready for sleep.

Keeping the room dark at bedtime encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone, melatonin. If necessary use a dim nightlight, ideally green.

Make sure their bedroom is a comfortable, calm environment. Blackout curtains will limit light in the room and ensure it's a comfortable temperature. Is it quiet and is their bed comfortable?

Do quiet and calm activities before bedtime, try to avoid anything to stimulating.

Ideally, avoid any screen-time for an hour before bedtime. If possible, keep electronics out of the bedroom.

Once they're in bed, encourage your child to read quietly or listen to some relaxing music, or read a story together.

If your child uses their bedroom for multiple reasons, try to create zones and make sure their bed is only used for sleeping.

Put your children to bed when they are tired but still awake. This helps them associate their bed with sleep, rather than other places. Equally, if they can't sleep, allow them to get up for a short period of time and do something which isn't stimulating before returning to bed. This stops them associating bed with struggling to sleep.

Avoid daytime naps, unless they are developmentally appropriate.

CONTINUES...

If children are struggling with separation, incorporate a comforter that makes them feel close to you. For younger children you could try the disappearing chair method. For older children keep bedtime check-ins short.

If your child has a bad dream, wake them up fully so they don't sink back into the dream. Encourage them to talk it through with you, reassure and comfort, but also remind them it's not real. Do not check for monsters etc...they aren't real!

Ensure your child isn't hungry or thirsty before they go to sleep. Avoid things high in sugar or caffeine later in the day. Good snacks would be wholewheat bread and honey (small amount of natural sugars), bananas, oatmeal, or warm milk. These all naturally contain substances which encourage sleep.

Use energy during the day. Ensure younger children do this through play throughout the day, and support older children to do this by enabling them to do activities and exercise they enjoy.

Children react to carers emotions, try to stay calm and positive about bedtime. Avoid emotionally upsetting conversations at bedtime.

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