



Rogerstone Primary School

A Good-Night Guide for Children

A Guide for Parents & Carers.



Sleep is essential to support children's development. Well rested children are more able to meet their full potential in every aspect of their lives.

Listed below are just a few of the symptoms of sleep deprivation in children:

- * Growth or hormone issues
- * Concentration difficulties
- * Mental health issues
- * Lowering of the immune system
 - * Hyperactivity
 - * Weight gain
- * Behavioural issues
- * Difficulty remembering things

Parents or carers who are disturbed by their child's poor sleep patterns are also likely to suffer from sleep deprivation. A well-rested household usually makes for a happier home.

Everybody can benefit from having a good sleep routine – even grown-ups! A good sleep routine needs to be planned well in advance. Consistency and firmness are also key. Firstly you need to consider what time bedtime will be and then work backwards, planning the hour leading up to it in some detail. If your child isn't settling until late you may need to gradually move their bedtime as previously described, the routine will need to be gradually moved too.



Here are some tips for devising the ideal bedtime routine:

- * Make sure bedtime is realistic, if your child isn't falling asleep until 11pm there is no point starting a routine at 6pm.
- * Turn all screens off in the hour before bedtime.
 - * Dim the lights, close the curtains if needs be and create some darkness to help to promote the melatonin (sleep hormone) production.
 - * Offer quiet activities that are motivating to your child. Fine motor skill activities are perfect to aid relaxation eg jigsaws, colouring in, threading, building with bricks etc.
 - * Baths are great if your child finds them relaxing. If however they are fearful of them or get over excited, they may not help in the bedtime routine. Ideally a bath should take place 30 minutes before bedtime as this aids relaxation by increasing the body temperature. It is the slow decrease in body temperature that helps us to feel more relaxed and nod off more easily.
 - * Get ready for bed in the same order - for example, pyjamas on, tooth brushing, toilet.
 - * Once in bed, spend some time reading a bedtime story with your child.
- * Wake them up at the same time each morning to help to strengthen their body clock

Creating the perfect sleep environment

A restful bedroom environment is important when addressing sleep. We all fall to sleep more easily when we are in a comfortable environment. Here are some top tips to help you create a restful bedroom:

- * Make sure the room is well aired.
- * The temperature should be around 16-20 degrees Celsius.
- * Choose suitable curtains to darken the environment. Blackout blinds can be particularly helpful in the summer months.
- * Avoid over stimulating colours in the bedroom such as bright red. Try calming colours such as neutrals and pastel shades.
- * A quiet room can encourage better sleep. Check what noises can be heard from your child's room.
- * Eliminate electronic devices from the bedroom. If this isn't possible, try to separate areas of the bedroom for sleep and play. It's important that children and teens know that the bed is a place for rest.
- * Cover over toys if they are causing a distraction at night or zone off the room so that they are out of sight.
- * Check whether the mattress and the pillows are comfortable.
- * Are there any posters that may appear to be frightening when the lights are off?

As children get older you can involve them in
using their bedroom, deciding on that they

Summary

All children are individuals and will have individual sleep needs. The following points are important to remember:

- * Children pick up on your anxiety, try to remain calm as bedtime approaches.
- * A bedtime routine is extremely important to support your child in relaxing. Bedtime routines need some thought and forward planning, being consistent is essential.
- * Consider what may be causing the sleep issues and then you can identify the most appropriate strategy to address it. Discuss these with an appropriate professional such as a GP, health visitor or sleep practitioner.
- * It takes children time to learn a new behaviour including during the night. Follow through any changes you make for at least two weeks to begin to see an improvement.
- * Make sure that your child is comfortable in their bed and that the bedroom environment is a relaxing one.



Resources

If your child's sleep issues are causing concern you should speak to your GP. In some areas of the country there are sleep practitioners who are trained to offer support around sleep difficulties.

Below are some organisations that you may find useful:

The Sleep Council
www.sleepcouncil.org.uk
Tel: 01756 791089

Enuresis Resource and Information Centre
(bed wetting)
www.eric.org.uk
Helpline: 0845 3708008

The Children's Sleep Charity
www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk
Tel: 07912 667676

The Lullaby Trust
www.lullabytrust.org.uk
Advice Line: 0808 802 6869