

Supporting Children with Sleep Difficulties



Information created from 'Together trust' training



'Good' Sleep

- Falling asleep in less than 20 mins
- Staying asleep (or not remembering waking up)
- Feeling refreshed in the morning
- Getting the recommend sleep duration for age

Noise

- Soft furnishings in rooms and windows closed
- Ensure sound that fall asleep with remains on all night
- Ear loops or flares may help
- Experiment with blue, brown, pink or white background noises:

White – mixture of frequencies
Brown – deeper sounds like ocean waves

Pink– similar to white noise but less harsh

Blue – all treble and no base

Bedroom

- Bed only for sleep
- Hide toys and desks/work
- Muted colours
- Consider if projectors and hanging toys are alerting for your child

Equipment

- Fidget bum
- Weighted blankets (should always follow safety guidelines and remove once child is asleep)
- Nesti
- Compression sheet
- Sensory friendly pyjamas

Light

- Light levels in environment impact release of serotonin
- Exposure to room light slows the release of melatonin in 99% of people
- Increased risk of night terrors, nightmares and anxiety in response to content on light emitting gadgets
- Black out blinds and curtains are often helpful
- Lumie clocks or Gro clocks are helpful in winter



Routine

- Consistent routines
- Provide the routine visually if helpful
- Meet their sensory needs as part of bedtime routine if neurodivergent.
- Possible routine may look like :

Wind down upstairs, Pjs, relaxation, book

Benefits of sleep

- Immune function
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Cognitive function

Temperature

- Ideal room temperature 16–18 degrees
- Avoid exercise 2 hrs before bed time as increases temperature
- Use 100% cotton fabrics
- Use cooling mattresses

Increase melatonin

- Low caffeine and sugar
- Eating regular meals and an evening supper
- A tryptophan rich snack one hour before bed. This includes foods such as :

Cherry tarts

Kiwis

Cheese

Nuts

oats

Blueberries

Strawberries

Bananas



Recommended sleep duration

Age Group	Age Range	Recommended Hours Of Sleep
Infant	4–12 months	12–16 hours
Toddler	1–2 years	11–14 hours
Pre-school	3–5 years	10–13 hours
School Age	6–12 years	9–12 hours
Teen	13–18 years	8–10 hours
Adult	18 years +	7 hours or more