



## Sleep



### **Promoting a good sleep routine:**

- Your child should have a consistent bedtime.
- Engage in a regular routine for the last 60 minutes before bedtime;
  - prepare your child for bedtime by putting on pyjamas at start of routine
  - add rocking and linear swinging activities to the routine. These activities are calming and can include sitting on a therapy ball and rocking backwards and forwards, rocking in a rocking chair, sitting on adults lap and rocking forward and backwards. Avoid spinning and rocking side to side as this is alerting
  - engage in deep pressure/soothing activities (list provided on last page)
  - keep the order of the activities roughly the same each night
  - do not include activities that could cause conflict/upset (e.g. picking out clothes for (pre)school)
- Avoid watching TV/screen time as part of bedtime routine at least 60 mins before bedtime as this is too stimulating-swap screen time for story time
- Avoid extending the time for the bedtime routine



## **Environmental Considerations:**

- Make the bedroom conducive for sleep; remove any unnecessary stimulus from the room i.e. toys, TV etc.
- Use the bedroom for sleeping only. Avoid playing in bedroom so your child learns to associate his/her bedroom with sleeping only.
- Avoid negative associations with the bedroom i.e. don't use this room for punishment or unpleasant routines

## ***Sensory Considerations:***

- Soft lighting in bedroom
- Whispering only once you enter the room for bedtime
- Soft relaxing music
- Soft/cuddly blankets on the bed
- Cotton or fleece pyjamas with labels/tags removed and no elastic at ankles/wrists
- Tuck your child in so that it gives a swaddling effect
- Consider adding another duvet or blanket for additional deep pressure. It will be important to monitor your child's temperature if you do this to avoid over-heating. It will also be important to ensure your child can easily remove the duvet and additional blanket by themselves, with ease
- Lavender, camomile and bergamot can be calming fragrances. Put a few drops of one of these essential oils on a tissue and place in the pillow case.

## ***Things to Avoid:***

- Overexcitement near bedtime (e.g. boisterous play, trampoline)
- Large meals very close to bedtime
- Too much time awake in bed (especially if distressed)
- Avoid using strong smelling detergents for bedclothes and pyjamas



## ***Sleeping in his own room***

Start talking to your child about sleeping in their own bedroom to prepare him/her for moving from your room to their own. When you talk about this use happy and excited tones and give lots of praise. If your child wants you to stay in their bedroom with him/her, avoid getting into the bed. Gradually fade your presence from the room over a few weeks. Begin by sitting on the edge of the bed for three consecutive nights. Do not talk during this time, just be present. After three nights, sit on a chair next to the bed for another three nights. Gradually get closer to the door until you are sitting outside the room for three nights. Be consistent with this approach and do not get into his bed even if your child really wants you to.

## **Deep Pressure Activities:**

- Deep pressure massage: Firmly massage arms and legs, shoulders, hands and head to relax.
- Build 'cuddle time' into routine (give tight squeezes)
- Roll your child up tightly in a duvet like a hotdog
- Kids sandwich –pretend you're making a sandwich out of your child and apply deep pressure using cushions/beanbags etc.

## **Waking during the night:**



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If your child wakes during the night:

- Wait as long as possible before going into him/her as may return to sleep on own
- Do not turn on the lights in the bedroom
- Keep talking to a minimum and whisper only
- Do not turn on the TV or use Ipad/tablet
- Incorporate deep pressure activities-rolling him/her up in duvet like a hotdog and deep pressure massage

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