

To achieve the best results, follow the advice consistently for 2 weeks:

Bedroom environment

- If your child dislikes the dark – try a nightlight in their bedroom instead of leaving the door open and landing light on. A nightlight in the bedroom can be left on all night and will help them resettlement if they wake during the night. Putting a light in the bedroom and closing the door will keep out noise from the rest of the house e.g. TV, toilet flushing etc.
- Ensure the bedroom is not too warm or too cool.
- Decorate in neutral calming colours – bright or primary colours can be over stimulating.
- Keep the bedroom clear of clutter and put all toys away to reduce visual distractions.
- Ensure the bed and bedding is comfortable.
- Remove all screens (television, phone, hand-held games) from the bedroom.
- Do not send your child to bed as a punishment – the bedroom should be maintained as a calm and happy place.

Calming strategies to assist relaxation of sleep


- Cut out caffeine and sugary snacks before bed (also cordials and squashes as these stimulate the bladder)
- Consider melatonin rich foods/drinks with slow energy release as a bedtime snack e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt, bananas, cherries, wholemeal toast, porridge.
- Switch off the television an hour prior to bed as this can be over stimulating.

- Try doing quiet/low stimulating activities for 30 mins before bed e.g. jigsaw, colouring, threading, Lego.
- Use calming music to assist relaxation.
- Use lavender scented products in the bedroom/during bath time to promote calm.
- Explain that bedtime is approaching verbally or using of a visual timetable.
- Ensure your child eats a healthy diet and has plenty of exercise during the day.
- Talk to your child regularly to ensure they have chance to share any worries and anxieties with you which may prevent them 'switching off' for sleep.


Developing a good bedtime routine

- A good bedtime routine should last for approx. 45 minutes – any longer and it will lose focus and meaning.
- Switch off screens (television, computers, phones) an hour before sleep
- Do the same thing at the same time each day including weekends – this will help to strengthen your child's body clock.
- Make sure everybody who puts the child to bed knows the routine and follows it consistently e.g. grandparents, babysitters as well as parents.
- Ensure your child is in their own bed before falling asleep – it is essential that they learn to fall asleep there in order to be able to resettle them self during the night.
- Leave the bedroom after you have said goodnight.
- Lower noise levels in the house at bedtime.



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- Cut out daytime naps to ensure your child is tired at bedtime (over 3 years). Children need daytime naps up to age 3. Between 9 months and 3 years avoid naps after 3.30 pm.
 - Darken the environment as you prepare your child for bed – keep lighting low and curtains drawn. This will give visual cues that bedtime is approaching.
 - Bath time should take place 30 minutes before you want your child to fall asleep. The fall in body temperature after a bath helps them fall asleep.
 - If your child does not enjoy bath time you could bath them in the morning instead to reduce stress levels before bed.

Night time waking

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- If your child wakes during the night have a set phrase such as 'it's night time, go to sleep' and only this. Don't give eye contact or get engaged in conversation.
 - Take your child back to their own bed immediately if they get up.
 - Decide what time is acceptable for starting the day. If this is 6.30am then if your child wakes before that time you should treat it as night time waking.
 - Keep the lights dim.

If your child is unwell you can make exceptions to the above advice as they may need to be comforted, medication etc during the night. Once they are fully recovered you can restart.

Sensory Occupational Therapy Service

