



# TOP TIPS FOR SLEEP HYGIENE

- Establish a consistent bedtime routine. Use visual cues or a social story to support this.
- Help your child to wind down early in the evening, set a guideline for turning off electronics and encourage relaxing activities such as puzzles, colouring and construction.
- Consider environmental factors that may affect sleep, for example lights, sounds, smells, temperature and distractions such as toys or electronics.
- Consider other issues that may affect sleep such as illness or emotions.
- Keep the bedtime routine calm and make sure it lasts no longer than 45 minutes.
- Run a bath for your child and allow 5-10 minutes for them to relax in the warmth and quiet.
- Go straight to the bedroom from the bathroom, get dried and into pyjamas, read a story or have some quiet time with calming music (or white noise).
- White noise such as a fan, nature sounds or music can help children to tune out other distracting sounds in the house and help them sleep more effectively.
- Say good night and turn out any lights promptly as soon as the child is settled in bed.
- Use security items such as a favourite toy or teddy to encourage the child to stay in bed.
- If the child is frightened of the dark, you could consider playing hide and seek in the dark with torches to ease the fear or using a small nightlight.
- Avoid scary books and television shows or films.
- Talk about any worries the child may have during the day to avoid discussing them at bedtime when they may remain on the child's mind and prevent them falling asleep.
- Many children find sleeping with a weighted blanket helps them fall asleep. The blankets can help children feel safer and also regulate an overactive central nervous system to support their body's natural ability to fall asleep.
- Encourage daily exercise lasting at least an hour - this helps children stay fit but also helps to regulate their sleep quality.
- Keep a daily sleep diary to monitor progress and use a rewards system for following bedtime routine and spending the night in their own bed.
- Use relaxation techniques and bedtime massage (further guidance on this is available on our website).