

How to support positive sleep habits

Routines:

- Create a routine that is the same every night, in the same order that has 4-5 different elements and is no longer than an hour (children lose focus if longer). This could include: bath, PJ's, teeth, story/stories, cuddle, white noise, bed (audio books are great for those that take longer to fall asleep)
- Establish the same sleep and wake times daily- avoid 'lie ins' as this effects circadian rhythm. 'Lie-ins' can reinforce late bedtimes/wakeful nights.
- Most children can't achieve 12 hours of sleep overnight, work out what your child's sleep needs are and work with that, e.g. if your child falls asleep at 8 and wakes at 6 they likely only need 10 hours of sleep, trying to get them to sleep more may just cause you frustration. In this case work with a 7pm bedtime routine for 8pm sleep rather than trying an earlier bedtime routine where your child loses focus and starts to 'play up'.

General tips and tricks

- Reduce screen time 2 hours before bed – it effects melatonin production due to the blue light. If this is tricky then choose an Ipad over a TV, you can turn the light down and put it on 'night mode' to reduce blue light OR purchase some blue light blocking glasses. Choose calmer TV shows. Avoid gaming in the evening – gaming is proven to increase cortisol and adrenalin which inhibits sleep, shift 'gaming' time earlier on in the afternoon.
- Be conscious about what children are watching to avoid children becoming scared/worried prior to bed. CBBC or Cbeebies are good options as they are age appropriate and educational, the BBC has a duty to produce high quality children's TV.
- Plan to have 10 minutes (minimum) of 1:1 connection time with each child. Often bedtime battles happen as children have been separated from you all day and are asking, in the only way they know how, for connection.
- Play 'fighting' or heavy work play (proprioceptive exercises) are great to include early on in the evening. These help to expel energy and help children to feel grounded.
- Keep bedtimes calm, keep talking and actions calm, avoid 'losing it' by planning how you will respond if things start to go wrong.
- Reduce lighting downstairs in the run up to bedtime – create a calming environment before going up to do bedtime routine. This helps the body go from fight/flight to a restful state. Bath in dimmed lighting – you can add lavender or essential oils.
- Include a snack and a glass of milk/water into bedtime routine (this avoids the 'I'm hungry/thirsty at bedtime). Foods containing tryptophan that help induce sleep include: Bananas, carrots, prunes, cheese, apricots, eggs, seeds and nuts. Raw/organic dairy products also contains tryptophan.

Inclusion Hub at Ropley Primary School

- Create a calming space in the bedroom – avoid using bedroom as a ‘punishment’.
Remove any unnecessary clutter.
- Dress in 100% cotton – it is better for temperature control and comfier.
- Bedrooms should be between 16-20 degrees.
- If a nightlight is needed ensure it is red – this helps melatonin production
- Try white/pink noise – this blocks out any household noises and can help children reach a deeper state of sleep.