

## Tips for good sleep habits



Do establish a bedtime routine, this will regulate your child's body clock and ensure healthy sleep/wake patterns



Do avoid stimulating activities in the hour before bedtime. You can start building a brief routine into your child's pre-bedtime period from an early age, but always keep it low key and relaxing.



Do stick to a bedtime routine. A bedtime routine might include; quiet play; a bath; a story then lights out and a purposeful 'goodnight.' Make it low key and relaxing. It should take no longer than 45 mins



Do enforce clear boundaries for bedtime behaviour. This applies to you as well as your child! If you say you'll bring a cup of milk don't be talked into fetching a second. Once boundaries are stretched most children will push them even more.



Do leave your child awake when you say goodnight. This will encourage him/her to learn to get to sleep by themselves.



Keep the bedroom at a comfortable temperature. The room doesn't need to be warmer than 18 degrees C. children sleep better at a temperature slightly below rather than above average.



Don't give your child any stimulating food or drink in the evening. This includes drinks such as tea, coffee and cola as well as sweet foods. Both caffeine and sugar are stimulating. But..Don't put your child to bed hungry. Most children will sleep better if they have eaten well during the day



Don't send your child to their bedroom as a punishment. They need to feel that the bedroom is a place of peace and harmony.



Don't respond to repeated calls for attention after saying goodnight. Most calls for a drink, another kiss, a trip to the toilet are an excuse to string out bedtime and should be resisted so they don't become a habit.



Don't discuss any difficulties relating to today or tomorrow. This may unearth difficulties or anxieties from your child's day which can interfere with sleep and are best discussed in the daytime. Try and get it out the way at tea time.

