

Skills for Living

Occupational Therapy Advice for Getting Ready to Sleep



Top Strategies / Activities to help your child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise earlier in the day • Try to keep bedtime and getting up time at the same times every day • Relax before bed, with a routine of calm activities that take up to an hour. Consider strategies like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a bath ○ a story or reading time (from a book, not an electronic device) ○ a firm massage 	<p>A visual chart of the bedtime routine will help children to understand what is happening now and next.</p>  <p><small>www.newmommasurvival.com</small></p>
<p>Have the right environment for sleep</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dark • gadget free • cool 	<p>A dark environment helps our brain produce chemicals to help us sleep.</p> <p>Gadgets or television can be exciting as well as producing light that interferes with the brain's ability to produce chemicals to help us sleep.</p> <p>Being too warm makes it hard to sleep.</p>
<p>Eat right for sleep:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat your big meal earlier in the day. • Caffeine (e.g. from cola, coffee tea, or chocolate) before bed can keep us awake. 	
<p>Make certain that naps are not too late to prevent them falling asleep at bedtime.</p>	
<p>Spend a little time outside each day, 30 minutes of sunlight each day helps us tune into natural sleep patterns.</p>	

Building the Skills	
<p>Instead of lying in bed awake or coming to find you, your child might try these activities in bed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a relaxation exercise • gentle music • books or talking books 	 
<p>Teach young children strategies to know when they can get up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gro clock • You can also adapt your own clock (for ideas look on pinterest) 	 
<p>A child may benefit from a stuffed toy or blanket for comfort.</p>	

Sensory considerations to help your child get ready to sleep	
<p>Try different pyjamas:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looser or tighter • Short or long sleeves • Different textures • Night shirt or onesie • No pyjamas
<p>Try different bedding:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping bag • Heavy blankets on top of a quilt or instead of one • Different textures (fleecy or silky) • Lycra sheets can help us feel snug 
<p>Noise:</p>	<p>Some children who are sensitive to noise find that listening to a constant sound such as soft music or white noise (like an untuned radio) can help to block any unpredictable noises and can be calming</p>
<p>Vision and Light:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children need it very dark, others prefer a nightlight to reassure them • Reduce visual distractions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A tent over the bed ○ Tidy away toys ○ Have plain walls 
<p>Body Awareness (proprioception and touch):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroke their back up and down. Try different pressures to find what works best - light rubbing, a back scratch, firm massage. • Roll the child up in a blanket and rock them, either on your lap or beside you. Wrap shoulders and feet warmly • Play "hot dog" or "squish": sandwich the child between pillows or quilts (with their head out). Stop if child is uneasy • Sit in an oversized beanbag chair for snugness around the head and body: try adding a heavy blanket too. • Try rolling a therapy ball up and down the length of the child's body to create deep pressure.

Useful resources:

Check out apps for sleep including:

- Meditations
- Sounds

- Headspace
- Slumber
- Rain Sleep Sounds
- Relax Melodies
- ASMR Sounds
- Sleep hero



Pinterest: www.pinterest.com
An online notice board of information

Type search words such as “sleep routines for kids”, “sleep skills and occupational therapy”

Websites and online links for more information

[For further information about sleep:](#)

www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/sleep-service

www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep

www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk/

<https://www.webmd.com/parenting/raising-fit-kids/recharge/bedtime-routine-tips#1>

[Establishing sleep routines:](#)

<https://dots.actionforchildren.org.uk/sleeping-night-time/creating-a-bedtime-routine-for-your-child/>

[For further information about helpful environments for sleep:](#)

<https://thesleepdoctor.com/2017/03/14/ideal-home-sleep-environment/>

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/perfect-sleep-environment/>

[Sleep videos:](#)

https://youtu.be/3eLfn7Ewx_s

https://youtu.be/_Xi2YQT1BNc

<https://youtu.be/lsDbEdMG8-Q>

[Teens and older children may like this video on sleep hacks by a teen:](#)

<https://youtu.be/5V8B4nWJGzY>