

Sleep tips for parents

ENVIRONMENT

Help them to self-settle by…

* Having the bedroom at a fairly cool temperature: 17 degrees is ideal
* Decorating the room in neutral, calming colours to reduce stimulation
* Removing TVs and other devices in their bedroom
* Using black out curtains to make the room as dark as possible

FOOD and DRINK

Help promote natural sleep by…

* Eating food that helps to induce sleep on an evening
* Avoiding caffeinated and sugary drinks completely and especially after midday

**Ideal supper**

* calcium-based products

(cheese, milk, yoghurts)

* bananas and apples
* white meats
* wholemeal grains, seeds and nuts

**Avoid**

* energy drinks
* caffeinated tea
* coffee
* sugary pop and cordial
* sugary hot chocolate

ROUTINE

Increase the production of melatonin (sleep hormone) by…

* Keeping a strict bed time and wake up time
* Turn devices off an hour before bed and instead do hand-eye coordination activities, e.g. sketching, colouring, jigsaws, playing with figures
* Incorporate a sleepy food supper into the bed time routine
* Use a visual timetable to help children and young people get into a routine
* Offer plenty of encouragement for following the sleep routine

**Average sleep needs for age groups:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4-6 years | 10.5-11.5 hours |
| 7-9 years | 10-11 hours |
| 10-12 years | 9-10 hours |
| 13-16 years | 8.5-9 hours |
| 16+ years | 8-9 hours |

 

EXERCISE

Help to set their body clock by…

* Getting them outdoors in the daylight early in the morning
* Exercising during the day, especially outdoors
* Varying the exercise; try calming exercise like yoga or meditation on an evening