



Sensory Processing Service

Bedtime & Sleep Advice



**Caring, Learning
& Growing Together**



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Bedtime & Sleep Advice

- Encourage your child to be out in the morning sunshine and to get natural daylight.
- Increase proprioceptive and heavy work activities throughout their day (see proprioception resource)
- Utilise night time mode on electronics where possible. Limiting screen time in the 1-2 hours before bedtime. Blue light is alerting and can have a negative impact on melatonin production.
- Create a bed time routine which includes proprioceptive activities a maximum of 40 minutes before bed time e.g. relaxing yoga could regulate other senses before bed time.
- Relax in a quiet space before heading to bed with dim lighting and decreased sensory input e.g. visual and auditory stimulation.
- Relaxing using a rhythmic motion such as gently rocking in a rocking chair can be very calming.
- Choose a relaxing activity like reading, drawing, jigsaw puzzles, cards or knitting to wind down.
- Creating a good sleep routine makes the activity predictable and reassuring – please see page on routine and predictability.
- Use a wheat bag or hot water bottle to provide comfort. A teddy or pillow with your perfume/cologne on to help with separation.
- Allow your child to wear pyjamas which they find comfortable, allow them to shop for pyjamas with you (where possible) to select fabrics and designs they prefer – removing tags and labels can also make nightwear more comfortable. A large shirt or nightie may be preferable if your child is tactile sensitive.



- Play soft, rhythmical music or white noise.
- Try lycra sheets / compression sheets, which provide calming deep pressure, ensure your child can get out if they need to.
- Offer heavy body pillows, duvets or weighted soft toys. Ensure your child can get out if they need to and always follow manufacturers guidelines.
- Deep breathing or sucking may help the body feel more calm and ready for sleep; for example, blow up a balloon several times, drink room temperature water through a straw, or suck on a sugarless mint.
- Have a tight hug or play the 'steam roller' game (roll an exercise ball firmly over your child's back while they lie on the carpeted floor or mat).
- Try using a sleep mask or black out curtains if your child is visually sensitive.
- Dim the lights and close the curtains prior to your child entering the room.
- A bed tent may help block out visual distractions if your child is visually sensitive.
- Avoid showering before bed, as this can be alerting, where possible opt for a warm bath.
- If your child is afraid of heights, try putting a mattress on the floor, or using a bed rail, to help them feel secure.
- Trial using a weighted blanket or wrapping your child up tightly in a blanket prior to bedtime and ensure they are supervised. Following all up to date guidance for weighted products and manufacturer's guidance.



Visit:

sensoryprocessinghub.humber.nhs.uk
for more help and information.