

## What if my child wakes in the night?



If your child gets up in the night, calmly return them to their bed. Avoid talking to them and try not to make eye contact if possible.

If your child has woken up because they have had a bad dream, quietly reassure them with a cuddle, stroke their hand or apply gentle pressure on their arm.

Some children will take longer to settle after a bad dream. You can help by reassuring them that the dream is not real, perhaps that dreams are just a movie which they are the director. They can change the movie by imaging something different e.g. the bad guy gets stuck in toffee or a monster turns to pink marshmallow.

## Ideas for anxious children

**Read my finger tips:** Trace words, pictures or messages on your child's back with your fingertips. Try and think of things to induce sweet dreams. This can be very soothing and relaxing.

**Sweet Dreams:** Before your child goes to sleep try exchanging stories that begin "The wonderful dream I'm going to have tonight is..."

**Piece it together:** Set up a jigsaw puzzle somewhere that won't be disturbed. Every night work on it with your child for 15 minutes as part of your bedtime routine. It is a calm activity and you can chat about nice things as the same time.

This leaflet has been produced as a suggested tip sheet only. Every child is different. These tips may help take the battle out of bedtime. Once a routine is established it is important for you, the parent, to be consistent. If you need any further support do not hesitate to contact me - Linda Parry - 07793308974 [linda.parry@wavell.hants.sch.uk](mailto:linda.parry@wavell.hants.sch.uk)

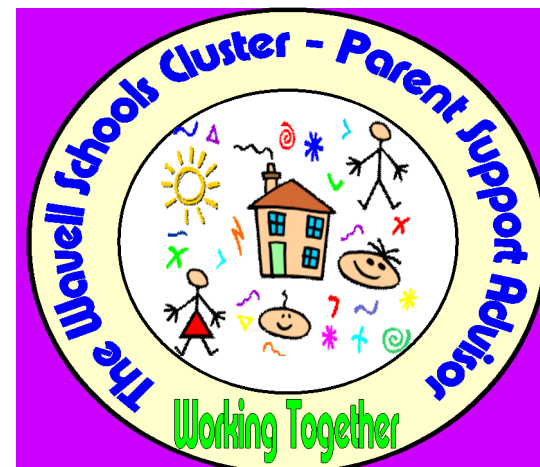
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South Farnborough Infant School  
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St Peter's C of E Junior School  
North Farnborough Infant School  
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St Mark's C of E Primary School  
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Rowhill Secondary School

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## Parent Support Advisor

Tips for a positive bedtime routine



## Why does sleep matter?

Sleep plays a significant role in brain development, and it is therefore important for children to get enough sleep as their bodies grow and mature. As well as the role it plays in our brain development, sleep also plays an important role in our brains day to day ability to function. Lack of sleep makes it much harder for us to concentrate, and we become forgetful, irritable and prone to being clumsy and making mistakes. Scientific evidence shows that right amount of night-time sleep is just as important for children's development as healthy eating and regular exercise.

## How much sleep is enough?

Sleep requirements differ from individual to individual but in general children between the ages of 5 and 11 need around 10-12 hours of sleep a night. As children get older social, school and family activities increase making bedtimes gradually later and later.



**Bedtime is as chance to spend some quality time together and it's a time for both you and your child to enjoy, your son or daughter will settle down in bed and drop off to sleep more easily.**

## Tips for setting up a routine:

- Keep your child's bedtime consistent. This will train your child's brain to recognise that it is tired.
- Try not to change your routine – if you want your child to have a slightly later bedtime at the weekend, still stick to the routine just maybe an hour later.
- Start the bedtime route 30 minutes to an hour before you want your child to sleep.
- Keep activities calm and relaxing such as; jigsaw puzzle, reading or drawing. No rigorous, lively or stimulating activity just before bed.
- Help your child relax, don't let them watch T.V. or use electronics devices immediately before bedtime as these stimulate the brain.
- Give your child plenty of time to avoid rushing and checking the time.
- Give your child a gentle reminder of what's coming next, possibly whilst they are in the bath or getting dressed. E.g. "In 5 minutes you can get out of the bath and get your pyjamas ready for your drink".
- Soothing relaxing music or sound can help to settle a child to sleep.
- Try to end the day on a positive note by telling your child something they did that pleased you.



## Use the 4 B's Bath, Brush, Book, Bed



- Start with a warm, not hot **bath**.
- Make sure the child's pyjamas/nightwear is comfortable e.g. not too tight, too warm or itchy.
- A warm milky drink. Milk or Horlicks, are good alternatives to cocoa/ hot chocolate as they do not contain caffeine. Milk contains Tryptophan which promotes sleep, (some children prefer to read at this stage).
- **Brush** teeth and check that your child has used the toilet before going to bed.
- Your child's bed should be free of clutter.
- Keep the lights dim in the bedroom to help the child prepare for the dark and to reinforce that night time is for sleeping.
- Read a **book** for an agreed number of pages to the child, take turns or let them read to you.
- Older children may prefer to read to themselves or chat about their day.
- If your child expresses a fear of the dark, a night light can help reduce the anxiety.
- Say good night in whichever way is comfortable for you both, a kiss, a cuddle, a stroke on the face and leave the room.