



SEN NEWS

June 2020



My focus for this edition is sleep- an area that may well be a particular area of difficulty for you and your child during this time and with the lighter evenings.

Please note that I am still working from home due to underlying health issues but I am always contactable by email or if it is more urgent, phone the school office and they will contact me directly

Kay.Lewis@bad.kent.sch.uk.

Take care and stay safe- Kay

Advice from Great Ormond Street: Sleep hygiene in children

The lead-up and routine around your child's bedtime is referred to as their 'sleep hygiene'.

Having good sleep hygiene can help your child both to settle to sleep and to stay asleep, and there are several things that parents can do to aid this:



Caffeine- a stimulant that prevents sleep, and can cause your child to stay awake for longer and to settle to sleep less easily. Limit intake of tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks and fizzy pop and avoid them altogether after lunchtime.

Food- a large meal before bedtime can prevent sleep. However, some foods before bedtime can be helpful in helping your child settle to sleep – for example: bananas, milk

Exercise- Children may have difficulty in falling asleep if they have been inactive throughout the day. However, exercise should be avoided directly before bedtime, as the heat created by the muscles by exercise can prevent your child falling asleep.

Environment- should be a place where they feel safe and secure, but should also be a place to sleep and not play. Remove things that distract them from sleeping – e.g toys, devices, tv. Light, room temperature and noise level should be adjusted, where possible, to ensure your child is comfortable to fall asleep.

Routine- Having a bedtime routine and a set bedtime can help your child to understand what to expect and how they should behave. A routine can start 30 minutes to two hours before bedtime, and can include activities to help wind down, such as a warm bath/shower or reading a story. Sticking to a set pattern each night will help your child to settle before bed and give them the time to calm down before sleeping. Going to the toilet as the last task before getting into bed can also help prevent your child from needing to get up in the night time.

Technology- using electronic devices in the hour before bedtime can prevent your child from settling to sleep- they produce light that is good at suppressing natural hormones in the brain that cause sleepiness. Ideally, these devices should be removed or if your child uses these devices to help them fall asleep, consider replacing this routine with a bedtime story or playing sleep music/ audio book.

Self-settling- it is important that your child learns to self-settle rather than seeking a parent or joining a parent's bed. This can be difficult to enforce, and may be emotionally challenging – both for child and parent – but parents should remain firm and assertive. If your child leaves their bed and seeks you out at night-time, you should try not to engage them in conversation, but lead them quietly and immediately back to bed. This may need to be repeated several times each night, but it is important that your child learns that they will receive the same response from you every time. If your child is anxious, the use of a night light, cuddly or even a baby monitor may help them to feel safe and to learn to self-settle.

More information about Sleep issues and children with Autism, can be found on the **National Autistic Society Website:**



<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/sleep.aspx>

As well as lots of advice, this link will take you to a list of Further information and Support'

The Children's Sleep Charity, has a number of useful leaflets on a variety of sleep associated topics, which are very useful and well worth a look:

<https://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk/>

Other useful resources:

Social Story about sleep to read with your child:
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi4hsKN1uXpAhWTonEKHd7QBdMQFjADegQIAhAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.camhscentre.mymind.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2013%2F12%2FMySleep-Resource.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3YrEaANUIKb_Xj3novMns6

Youtube clip on Managing Sleep Conditions by a Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMNcgSLMpTA&feature=youtu.be&t=5>



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