

Bedtime Strategies

Tips

- Start thinking bedtime from the moment your child comes home from school.
- Incorporate movement after school (sports, trampoline, wheelbarrow, wall push-ups...)
- Have a set home-work time and a set homework area (preferably not in their bedroom)
- Consider evening snacks:
 - Crunchy foods are considered to be alerting foods so you may not want to encourage a crunchy snack at the end of the day.
 - Chewy foods are considered to be organizing foods (e.g. dried fruit, granola bars, etc.)
 - Sucking foods (e.g. yogurt in a tube, a warm drink using a straw, etc). May be calming
 - Protein may be helpful since your child will go hours without eating through the night
- Have a consistent and predictable bedtime and routine
- For children 5 years old or older allow for approximately 9-10 hours of sleep daily.
- For children 3-4 years old or younger allow for approximately 10-11 hours of sleep daily.
- Consider air purifiers, air purify plants, and/or hypo-allergenic items
- Use a visual schedule of the routine
- Give children a choice when possible - i.e choosing which book to read
- Avoid exciting or dieting activities close to bedtime (spinning and jumping)

Involve all the senses:

- **Auditory**
 - White noise may be helpful to help a child fall asleep and/or throughout the night (e.g. a fan running, waves, rain, Cloud B stuffed animals have white noise incorporated into some of them, etc.)
- **Proprioception (joint/muscle awareness)**
 - Deep pressure is a calming technique some examples that may be incorporated into a bed-time routine 1. Massage (slow, firm and always keeping one hand on child's back)
 - Weighted blanket for a set period of time prior to bed such as during story-time
 - Teach your child to tighten one body part (e.g. right arm first, left arm next) for 5-10 seconds
 - Pillow or stuffed animal on either side of child to snuggle them in and give deep pressure to body
 - Use a sheet, blanket and comforter for more of a deep pressure throughout the night
- **Vestibular System (balance system)**
 - Linear swinging is a calming movement.
 - Rocking in a rocking chair or swing
- **Tactile**
 - Warm bath or shower
 - Type of pajamas (tight vs loose; cotton vs fleece, tags vs no tags)
 - Type of bedding (consider above 400 thread count), cotton or jersey
 - Brushing teeth (varying toothbrush types, vibrating toothbrushes are great; however, if unable to tolerate at night due to alerting sensation consider using it only in the am)
- **Visual**
 - Dim lights
 - Read by lamp or dimmed overhead light
 - Consider room darkening shades
 - If your child needs a night-light consider one that is not as bright or a bed toy that lights-up (e.g. Cloud B light-up turtle)
 - No TV or computer at least 60 minutes or more prior to bedtime
- **Olfactory**
 - Consider aromatherapy (identify calming scents for your child such as lavender or your perfume sprayed on a stuffed animal or pillow)