

Sleep Hygiene / Sleep Environment



Sleep hygiene/environment is one of the most important things to get right and should be the first thing you focus on.

Sleep hygiene/environment is where you set the room up so the child is as comfortable as they can be, physically and emotionally. This sounds easy but can be hard work and somewhat confusing.

How your child falls asleep at the beginning of the night is what they need in the middle of the night as well. For example, if you turn on the hall light on for them to fall asleep, this then needs to be on if they wake up in the middle of the night. If they listen to calming music when they go to sleep, this will need to stay on all night. Remember consistency is key.

We suggest starting off with getting the bedroom as dark as possible as this helps aid melatonin production. If needed, you can use a small night light which has one colour that does not move around the room. Then work your way through all of the 8 senses to see if changes need to be made.

Sight:

- What can you see?
- Are there any scary shadows that to your child can see which looks like monsters?
- Can they see an I-Pad in the room and be tempted to use it?
- Is the room tidy and de-cluttered or have toys been left out and your child now wants to play with them.
- Is there any light coming into their bedroom that's not the night light, will it be there all night?

Hearing:

- What can you hear, is it coming from their bedroom?
- Do you live on a busy road, can you hear lots of traffic?
- What is going on in the house, can you hear people moving around in the kitchen cooking dinner?
- Do they have music set up for so many minutes or hours what gets turned off?

Taste:

- Have they just brushed their teeth and not liking the taste of tooth paste still in their mouth?
- Did they still have the taste of a sweet treat in their mouth and want more?
- Did they have to have medicine before bed and don't like the taste?

Touch:

- Do they like the feel of their bed sheets? Have they just been washed and no longer feel as soft?
- Do they need a teddy or comforter to touch at night?
- Can they feel the labels in the back of their pyjamas that's annoying them?
- Is there bed pillow too hard or too soft?

Smell:

- Can they smell the dinner cooking downstairs and don't like it?
- Can they smell something horrible coming in from the window?
- Do they like the smell of fresh bed sheets or do they prefer the smell of themselves on the bed sheets?
- Has someone just sprayed something in a nearby room and wafting through into their room?

Proprioception: Your body's ability to sense movement.

- Do they know what position they prefer to lay in?
- Can they sense where their body parts are and what they're doing?

Vestibular: The proception of where your body is in space.

- Can the feel the mattress underneath them?
- Is the mattress hard enough?
- Do they need a weighted blanket?
- Are they sensitive to movement?
- Are they in a bunk bed, do they have good balance?

Interoception: Having the ability to detect internal bodily sensations:

- Are they too hot or too cold?
- Are they hungry or too full?
- Are they thirsty?
- Are they itchy or ticklish?
- Do they need the toilet?