

Sleep

Tips for children aged 2
to 4 years



**Sure Start
Children's Centres**
Worcestershire

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Sleep

Tips for children aged 2 to 4 years



Everyone has sleep cycles of shallow, deep and wakeful periods.

It is important to establish sleep routines that children can independently follow if they wake up during a shallow period of sleep.

Children are more likely to wake fully from a light period of sleep if they are often rewarded with food, attention and cuddles.

But the most common reason for sleep difficulties is teething, being unwell or having an ongoing health issue so it is important to check for this first. If you are worried about your child's health, it is important to get them checked by your GP or Health Visitor.

Sleep triggers

Sleep triggers are parts of our routine that help us sleep. We all have them and without them it is difficult to sleep. Adult sleep triggers include checking the house is locked, setting the alarm clock or reading. Think of your sleep triggers.

How easy is it to sleep if you haven't gone through your sleep triggers?

Think about your child's sleep from their point of view.

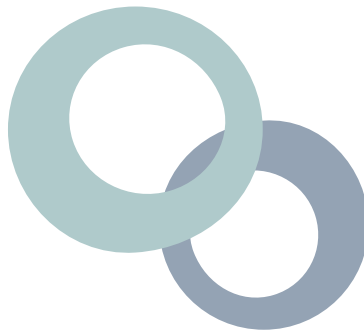
Establishing a sleep routine

- Have a regular bedtime routine that everyone in the house follows, even at the weekend! This has to be a calming routine and can include things like a bath, calming music and/or a story but not exciting, stimulating things such as tea, cola, exercise or noisy games.
- Put your child to bed awake and kiss them good night.
- Turn off the main light, darken the room and leave a night light as needed.
- Leave the room.
- Share this bedtime routine as parents/carers so your child does not rely on one person if you can.
- Don't have sleep triggers that depend on you being there such as rocking, dummies, feeding to sleep or falling asleep on the sofa as then your child will need them to fall asleep. A special blanket or a toy is something that can be used as a sleep trigger but your child can get it themselves.

Tips for sleeping

- Make your child's bedroom a special place that is calm and not a place used as a punishment.
- Follow the bedroom routine consistently so if your child gets out of bed, also respond consistently.
- Keep bedtime a relaxing time.
- Don't get angry or frustrated if your child wakes up, stay calm and think about what you're saying. It is better to say "Go to sleep", take them back to bed and tuck them in quickly. This needs to be done consistently and can take time to change previous sleep habits.
- Praise and reward your child for good sleeping in the morning.
- Remember your child is an individual and has their own sleep triggers.
- Try not to get stressed about your child's sleep, stay calm.

To change a child's sleep triggers and routines is challenging and takes time and patience but it will be worth it in the long run!



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