



# Parents' sleep pack

The Learning Disabilities Team

## Introduction

You have been referred into our Learning Disabilities Nurse Clinics for Support around sleep. All of our nurses have been trained via the 'sleep Scotland Charity' to become sleep counsellors, enabling them to provide counselling for parents and carers of children and young people with a learning disability. Sleep counselling helps parents and carers by giving them specific, tried and tested behavioural and cognitive techniques to adapt their child's night-time behaviour.

Before we send you an appointment to meet with two of our Learning Disability Nurses (Sleep Counsellors) we have enclosed a 'sleep pack' for you to have a look at. The Sleep pack has some information around:

- Average sleep needs
- Sleep hygiene
- An example of a graded sleep Programme
- Sleep diaries

Please can you complete some sleep diaries prior to your first appointment. We will send you an appointment in the post where we will meet with yourself to go through the sleep assessment. We do not need to see your child at this point. Once we have completed the sleep assessment and looked through the sleep diaries, we will then put a sleep management programme in place (a plan). We fully understand some of the difficulties and daily struggles our families go through, and therefore will ensure that is made as person centred as possible to meet the needs of the young person and their families.

If you have any further questions or require any further information please do not hesitate to give us a call on **0330 024 5321**

We look forward to meeting with you and your child in the near future.

## Average sleep needs

Age	Average number of hours of sleep needed	
	Daytime	Nighttime
1 week	8	8 ½
4 weeks	6	8
3 months	5	10
6 months	4	10
9 months	2 ¾	11 ¼
12 months	2 ½	11 ½
2 years	1 ¼	11
3 years		11
4 years		11 ½
5 years		11
6 years		10
7 years		10 ½
8 years		10 ¼
9 years		10
10 years		9
11 years		9 ½
12 years		9 ¼
13 years		9
14 years		9
15 years		8
16 years		8

This is taken from Lyn Quine “Solving Children’s Sleep Problems”. The amount of sleep children need will vary, particularly for those with special needs.

## Developing good sleep hygiene

1. Make sure that the child's room is quiet and dark.
2. Wake the child at a regular hour each morning, so that the circadian cycle is strengthened.
3. Keep a regular bedtime for the child.
4. Keep room temperature to a comfortable level. High temperatures disturb sleep.
5. Environmental noise should be kept to a minimum (no loud TVs).
6. Make sure that the child does not go to bed hungry, but do not give a child over 6 months old feeds/drinks during the night.
7. Help the child to learn to fall asleep alone in his/her bed, without your presence.
8. Avoid stimulating activity in the hour before bedtime.
9. Do not let the child have prolonged naps in the late afternoon. If the child still needs to sleep, schedule the nap for early afternoon.
10. Avoid drinks of cola, chocolate, tea and coffee i.e. caffeine and additives, before bedtime, instead have a warm milk drink.

## Sleep Diary

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Time and length of nap(s) in day							
Time started preparing for bed							
Any problems here?							
If so, what did you do?							
Time in bed at night							
Where?							
How long did they take to settle?							
What did you do?							
Time went to sleep							
How many times did they wake? (note length of each waking)							
What did you do when they woke?							
Time parents go to bed							
Time woke in morning							

## Sample Graded Programme

This is one sample of a programme parents often choose because it is done gradually. The aim is to help the child/young person to fall asleep alone. You will still need to tailor make it a little towards the particular child and family.

- Step 1** Choose a reasonable bedtime when the child is tired, but not overtired.
- Step 2** Start a regular relaxing routine about 1 hour before bedtime. The ½ hour before bath activities should be calming and non-stimulating e.g. jigsaws, books, or building blocks etc.
- Step 3** Use board maker symbols to reinforce activity.
- Step 4** Go 'upstairs' to the bathroom and make sure the child has their snack before. Once upstairs (in night-time rooms), never go downstairs again.
- Step 5** Have a relaxing bath that could last up to 15-20 minutes. The aim of the bath is for an unwinding routine.
- Step 6** Take time to rub and cuddle the child with a towel and put on pyjamas.
- Step 7** Take the child to the bedroom and read a story or put on a story tape. Take the child to their bedroom and settle him/her in his/her bed.
- Step 8** Once the routine is complete, say goodnight. Your goal is now to distance yourself gradually from the child's room is a series of steps. This could take days or weeks according to the circumstances with each family.
- Step 9** The child will eventually learn the new bedtime rules. You can begin by sitting on a chair at the side of the bed.
- Step 10** Gradually move the chair away, e.g. to the end of the bed, by the door, outside the door etc.

Any daytime naps after 1pm, particularly on the school bus/taxi should be phased out. Each week you carry out the graded programme, you can begin the routine 15 minutes earlier, if necessary continue until the child is at the desired bedtimes. After the parent has said goodnight, limit the interaction with the child. Even limit eye contact. The parent is now there to re-assure him/her and help them learn to go to sleep.

## Developing good sleep hygiene

1. Keep a regular bedtime for your child and wake your child at a regular hour each morning, so that the body clock is strengthened.
2. Do not let your child have prolonged naps in the late afternoon. If your child still needs to sleep, schedule the nap for early afternoon.
3. Avoid stimulating activity in the hour before bedtime, including TV, tablets and consoles.
4. Avoid drinks of cola, chocolate, tea and coffee i.e. caffeine and additives before bedtime. Instead have a warm milk drink.
5. Make sure that your child does not go to bed hungry, but do not give a child over six months old feeds/drinks during the night.
6. Make sure that your child's room is quiet and dark.
7. Keep room temperature to a comfortable level. High temperatures disturb sleep.
8. Keep room clear of distractions and electronic equipment such as TV and consoles.
9. Environmental noise should be kept to a minimum (no loud TV).
10. Help your child to learn to fall asleep alone in his/her bed, without your presence.

