

What is a Bedtime Box?

A Bedtime Box is a collection of screen-free, calming activities for your family to do together in the run up to bedtime. Here, we'll share ideas of things you could put in your family's Bedtime Box to encourage good sleep and support wellbeing.

How Can a Bedtime Box Help My Child to Sleep?

Focusing on screen-free activities before bed will promote the production of melatonin and help to create a restful sleep. Activities involving screens - such as television, laptops, tablets and mobile phones - can be mentally stimulating and may also inhibit the production of melatonin, the sleep hormone that helps us to feel drowsy.

How Can a Bedtime Box Help My Child to Sleep?

There will be lots of things around your home which can go into your Bedtime Box.

Hand-eye coordination activities are a great place to start because they aid relaxation. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Jigsaw puzzles
- Paper and crayons or pens for drawing
- Stacking or building blocks
- Shape sorting games
- Magnetic fishing games
- Threading games (including threading beads onto string or simple jewellery making)

We have a range of Twinkl Bedtime resources which you might like to try. You could add these **bedtime-themed dot to dots**, **threading cards**, **button placing activities** and **playdough mats** to your Bedtime Box too. For a range of other meditations and relaxing activities, check out our **Health and Wellbeing** section of the Parents' Hub.

Now add your favourite bedtime books! Depending on the age of your child/children, you could ask them to pick one each. It doesn't have to be a reading book; picture books are great too. Encourage your child to chat to you about the pictures and the story, or you could draw a picture of each other's favourite character from the book.

Does your family have a favourite board game? Maybe you could add that to the Bedtime Box too. But... choose wisely!

Some things to consider:

- It's best that no one goes to bed having lost at their favourite game!
- Choose a game which can be played more than once, like dominoes, cards, snap or noughts and crosses

Add something **calm and relaxing to your box**. This might be different for everyone and might change. You could add your favourite soft cuddly toy or perhaps a blanket which you find comforting. You could put on some warm fluffy socks or even add in a picture to remind you of a happy memory.

Ultimately, your Bedtime Box is whatever works best for you and your family. Make sure anything you choose is going to be calming and relaxing so that it prepares everyone for a good night's sleep.

Other Things to Consider with Your Bedtime Box

It might be nice to have **music on in the background** while you do these activities. Make sure it's not too loud or energetic. Classical music may be a good choice because it can be relaxing and soothing during a bedtime routine.

Encourage your child to **concentrate on their breathing**. Ask them to imagine breathing in a beautiful white light and blowing out any worries or troubles each time they exhale. Breathing exercises are also useful for parents to carry out and are a great exercise to enjoy together.

Teach your child to progressively **relax the muscles in their body** as they play. They can begin by tensing their feet to the count of 5 and then letting them relax.



Next, tense the calf muscles and relax, moving up to the thighs and so on. Keep going until they have relaxed each part of their body. This is another good activity to try together.

End the day on a positive note by sharing three great things that have happened during the day. These can be big things or really small things like enjoying a nice breakfast or wearing your favourite pair of socks.

Consider how to **store your Bedtime Box**. The contents of your Bedtime Box can be changed and there are no rules about how you store it. Make sure it is easily accessible and fits all of your items in so it stays tidy. Why not check out this resource for great design ideas the whole family can get involved with?