

Sleep routine tips and insights

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Insights on children's attitude to sleep

Going to bed late impacts on the quality of children's sleep and can make waking up in the morning a challenge. Whether it's a fear of missing out (FOMO) or anxiety about being separated from their parents, children may see sleep time as no fun. Older children may find that sleep gets in the way of entertainment and try to put it off so they can spend time on other activities, such as playing games or watching TV.

Insights as to why children don't understand the concept of time

- Children live in the now, unlike adults who are constantly thinking two steps ahead. Adults benefit from their experience of time, as it is at the core of their routines. There are many factors in life that ensure time is at the forefront of adult's minds. As a result, it's easy to see that for children time is not so critical
- Children are emotion orientated, and ruled by how they feel in the moment, at any given time...try taking a kid away from an activity they are enjoying, for example, and you see the consequences
- The way children learn is through their senses and through experiences, so time is a very hard concept for them to grasp
- Children's concept of time is based on the stage of their brain development. The more immature their brain, the less likely they are able to understand time

What does this lack of understanding mean for parents?

- The fact that children find it hard to understand time means that some parents struggle with behavioural management. When your children won't eat on time, get dressed at the right time or know when to stop playing on their games console, you know they are struggling with this. This is a major reason why pulling children away from activities can lead to temper tantrums
- The end result of this is poor sleep patterns, bedtime woes, early and frequent wakes during the night

Top 4 tips for encouraging children to sleep through the night

- Make bedtime fun (calm and quiet fun). Help make children feel part of the process so it doesn't feel like a daily chore
- Make sure your child feels safe in their room. Use light, calm colours, and gentle sounds, like white noise or audio books to ensure a good night's sleep
- Be truthful when you put them to bed, leave if you say you are leaving and come back if you say you are going to come back
- To reassure anxious children, meet their needs first and sleep will soon follow

Top 5 tips for encouraging children to go to sleep on time/wake up on time

- Give children advance warning that bedtime is soon or if they will be waking up shortly
- Link events to experiences. For example, 'when I read this book you lie down, when SleepTime Mickey's moon is showing, it's time for bed'
- Have a good routine, so that means no digital devices an hour before bed
- For children who find it hard to understand time, use SleepTime Mickey to help them sleep at night and stay in bed if they wake early
- Allow children to spend more time in their room to get used to SleepTime Mickey and to feel comfortable being on their own. Their room is a place of safety and positive feeling; it should not just be used for sleep

Top 4 ways to improve a child's sleep time routine

- Sign post bedtime with cues e.g. engage them the SleepTime Mickey
- Place a surprise under their pillow at night to create curiosity and compliance so they look forward to going to bed
- Ensure your child's sleeping space is comfortable, use natural fibre mattresses and covers to help regulate their temperature
- Use red or blue night-lights, alongside the SleepTime Mickey, to help promote a safe sleep

Top 4 ways that light can enhance a child's sleep time routine

- Lighting can signal that it is time for bed
- Lighting can enhance quality of sleep
- Children feel less scared when they can see their environment it offers them reassurance
- Light can aid the brain in knowing when it's time to sleep and when it's time to wake up