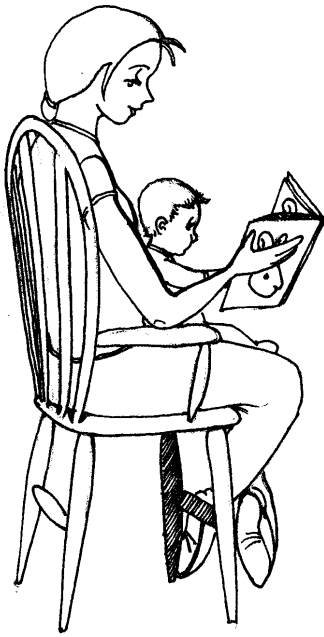


Helping your child settle to sleep

Did you know that 30 - 40 % of all children resist going to sleep? So you are not alone.

Most children take $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to fall asleep, so it's important for them to stay relaxed while they are falling asleep.

Here are some ideas from parents that you might want to try.



"last story"

Decide on a winding-down routine: warm bath, last snack, last drink, last story, music/ story tape - whatever suits you and your child. Try to keep everything in the same order every night.

Have a routine and whatever it is stick to it. Stay confident and clear for a month with no interruptions while getting ready for bed - it will be worth it in the end.



"warm bath"

Draw a picture of a clock showing your child's bedtime - put it near a real clock - when both clocks show the same time ..." Oh look, It's bedtime!" (A countdown to bedtime can sometimes help too: "10 minutes; 5 minutes; 1 minute" etc)



"Oh look, its bedtime"



"Show your child it's dark..."

In winter months look out of the window - show your child it's dark everywhere. Talk about the curtains being shut, say that the lights are out, the stars are shining, the birds are asleep etc.

Talk about your child's friends Tom, Harry and Jenny from Peep/playgroup being asleep.

Stay relaxed & soothing, don't let bedtime turn into a battle of wills.

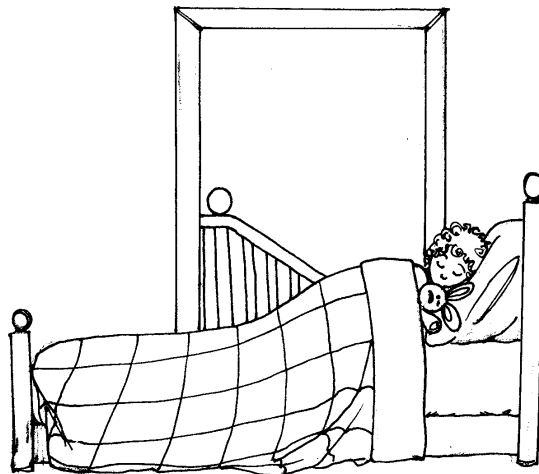


"Keep your child busy and active all day"

Talk to your child about their day, an 'all about me story' can help a child feel sleepy and reassured, and at the same time develop a child's memory & vocabulary.

Put on music/Peep tape, leave the landing light on; leave doors open - so your child can hear reassuring noises and voices.

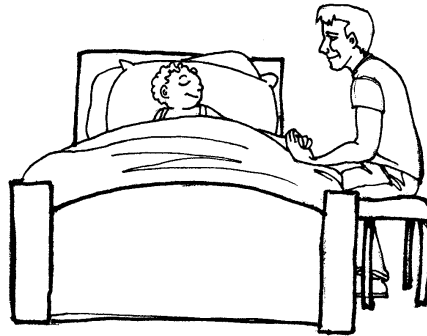
Try keeping your child busy, active all day - without a daytime sleep



"leave doors open"

Is the bedroom too dark? Try using a plug in night light; leave door slightly open. Check child is ok? Not hungry, thirsty, too hot or too cold? Have a drink of water upstairs so there is no need for you or your child to go down to the kitchen.

Be with your child/hold your child's hand for a time and give a warning that you're going to go and do something (boring) eg: ' in two minutes I'm going to tidy up '



"hold your child's hand"

Run a bath for yourself or have a shower (if possible) - the sound of water can help to send children to sleep (others might want to join in! do what works for your child)
Try to make sure TV; radio and the rest of the family are quieter once your child is in bed - though act as you would normally.
Don't aim for silence!



move further away gradually

(A few extra tips from a health visitor, who is also a mum: Some children need weaning off parents sitting with them till they are asleep. You could try moving further away from the bed gradually so they are reassured you are still there. The need for a daytime sleep is very age dependant. Some 2 year olds sleep better at night if they have a half hour nap in the day - providing it's not too near bedtime - say not later than 4 hours before bed. And do talk to your health visitor about sleep worries if you want to).