






Preparing for Better Sleep Checklist

Preparation is half the battle. Here are some things to consider to encourage good sleep habits. Make sure you have these basics in place as a great first step towards improvements in sleep.

1. Preparing the environment for sleep:

	Room temperature for sleeping is important. Ideal is 16 to 20 degrees centigrade.
	Reduce light . Use blackout blinds, turn hallway lights off and use a small red bulb in a bedside lamp if necessary.
	The bed and bedding are important. Ensure the bed is comfortable . Tucked in duvets and/or a weighted blanket can assist.
	Reduce noise or use a 'masking device for white noise'. Also reduce other noise in the home such as from the TV or playing noises from other children.
	Reduce your child's access to toys in the bedroom during bedtime. Put stimulating toys in a basket/ laundry basket and remove it from the child's room; a few cuddly toys could be left for comfort.

2. Preparing your child for sleep

	No screens at least an hour before bedtime. Their blue light is too stimulating.
	It's best NOT to sleep on a full stomach, no food and drink at least an hour before bedtime.
	Ideally eliminate caffeine from midday. Remember, fizzy drinks often have caffeine as does tea and chocolate.
	Ensure your child has enough water to drink at least an hour before bedtime. This gives them a chance to empty their bladder before they sleep, reducing the chance of bedwetting, or waking others for help to go to the loo.
	Calcium based food or drink can help promote sleep, but not too near bedtime.
	Exercise e.g. cycling, running, playing in the park has to be finished at least 2 hours before bedtime
	Introduce and stick to a clear and consistent bedtime routine . You can use a visual schedule to help your child understand and follow this.
	A quiet squash or squeeze can be relaxing for many autistic children. This can help them wind down for sleep if included as part of the bedtime routine. You can find out more about this on our advice page on <i>Sensory Regulation and Participation</i> on our website.

