

Haringey Educational Psychology Service

Tips for helping primary ASD children with sleep

Many children with ASD (40-80%) have sleep difficulties and this can be especially difficult at the moment when routines have changed. Here are some tips to help your child with their sleep:



Checklist:

- Do you have a **ROUTINE** before bed-time? This is particularly important at the moment, especially as many children won't have the routine of the school day. Try and keep the bed-time routine 30-45 minutes but no longer than this. Make it the same every night and you may want to include a time-table or checklist with pictures with prompts. Try and include things like bath and low lights as this helps to release the sleepy hormone (melatonin)
- Are you keeping to regular **TIMINGS**? Try your best to keep the timings of your child's bed-time and getting up the same (or at least within an hour) in the week and the weekends
- Are you managing to get out in the day-time? Exposure to **DAY-LIGHT** helps sleep
- Is your child having **REGULAR MEAL-TIMES**? Avoid heavy meals at the end of the day or large snacks as this can affect sleep
- Is your child getting **REGULAR EXERCISE** during the day? This helps sleep but make sure it is at least 2 hours before bed-time
- Are your child's **SENSORY NEEDS** affecting their sleep? Is your child very active before bed-time? Think about which activities are calming for your child. Move stimulating events/activities to earlier in the evening. Depending on their needs, you could try things like: deep pressure massage/a deep pressure activity/jumping on the trampoline followed by a calming activity. Check if their room too cluttered. Is the temperature ok in their room and is it dark enough? Is their bedding and pyjamas bothering them?
- Is your child using **SCREENS** just before bed-time? Try to avoid them using these at least an hour before bed as it stops melatonin from being released
- **AVOID** them napping during the day



For further information about ASD and sleep:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/sleep.aspx>

