

What is good sleep?

- Falling asleep quickly
- Staying asleep through the night
- Wake (relatively) easily
- Not feeling drowsy during the day

Common issues:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Sleep interfering behaviour
- Early wakings
- Difficulty staying asleep
- Challenging behaviour during bedtime routines

Medical/ biological factors:

Making a medical appointment to discuss your child's sleep issues is an important first step. If there are any medical or biological issues underlying the sleep behaviours, these should be targeted before attempting to establish a new bedtime routine.

What can you do:

- Medical consent that rules out any medical or biological factors
- Develop an ideal sleep schedule
 - Decide how much sleep your child needs based on their age
- Create a predictable bedtime routine
 - Be consistent (e.g., going to sleep at the same time every night), use visual aids if necessary, and ensure enough physical activity during awake times.
- Optimize the bedroom or sleep conditions
 - Temperature of room, lighting, sounds, blankets, and comfort items.
- Recognize and replace sleep dependencies
 - Ensure items can be there even when the parent is not. For example, a stuffed animal that does not fall out of bed and is easily transportable to other locations.
- Address sleep interfering behaviours
 - Try to ensure all needs the child may have been met before going to bed. You can use a bedtime pass or time-based visiting to help with sleep interfering behaviours.

Bedtime issues vary across individuals. If establishing a bedtime routine is a goal for your child or youth, notify your Family Support Worker or a member of your OAP team.

References:

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