



THE FIRST YEAR Your baby will need you to be close to you and early on you will need to be responsive in a fairly immediate way. In the first few months don't worry too much about trying to build in a routine, just go with the natural rhythm of your baby's sleep- wake cycles. You will notice that your baby's sleep cycles are closely linked to their feeding pattern both during the day and at night. Each baby is different and as you and your baby get to know each other, you will become more confident in recognising your baby's signs.

From around 3 months it can be helpful to start to introduce a simple short pre-bedtime routine which is relaxing and calming. This can include giving your baby a bath if this settles them, putting on their night clothes, calming down from the day by singing a lullaby or spending a quiet soothing one to one time with your baby and turning down the lights to help your baby recognize the difference between day and night. There is a range of information and advice about creating a safe and comfortable environment for your baby to sleep in. This includes: sharing a room with your baby, the best sleeping position for a baby, safe room temperature, where a baby should sleep, supporting breastfeeding. New research is emerging all the time about these topics and you can find up-to-date information at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/getting-baby-to-sleep/>



TODDLERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN Your child may now be sleeping in their own room and you may find carrying out part of the bedtime routine in their bedroom helps them to settle. For example, you could read a story once they are in bed. As you start to think about moving your child from a cot to a bed you may have concerns about how your child will cope with this change. It is another step in them 'growing up'. There is no set time to make this change although most children are ready between 18 months and 3 years. The time your toddler or child goes to bed may also change as they develop and their daytime routine changes. Once again, there is no one bedtime that suits every child. Some children show signs of being ready for bed at 6pm while others do not appear tired until 8pm.

Many parents are beginning to ask about whether using televisions, mobile phones or tablets in their child's bedroom affects a child's sleep. There is now more known about how these devices can disrupt children's sleep and that includes young children as well as teenagers. Artificial light such as that emitted from TVs, phone and tablets has been found to reduce the hormone that tells our brain to go to sleep, so turning the devices off an hour or two before bedtime can be helpful to your child.

TEENAGERS need at least 8- 9 hours sleep to be optimally alert. Changes in sleep patterns are linked to puberty and changes in hormones. Puberty is a time when teenager's physical growth speeds up and this is controlled by the release of growth hormone, girls about 11 years, boys about 14 years. In teenagers the sleep hormone (Melatonin) is released about 1am compared to 10pm in adults, therefore they will struggle to get up early. Teenagers will continue with this sleep pattern until they have finished puberty. Near the end of puberty, they will change to an adult pattern. For girls this is around 19.5 years of age. For boys this is around 21 years of age. Encourage a calm down time such as agreeing a time for them to stop using their mobile, TV or gaming.



For more information about sleep and the parenting support available, please contact the Parenting Team via our Facebook page, or by email to bsmhft.parenting@nhs.net

Weekly parenting themed tweets can be viewed on our Facebook page, or via the school nurse twitter feed: @SolSchNurses