



### Sensory—Sleeping

Some children with reduced sensory arousal particularly relating to the proprioceptive sense can struggle to settle at night. A good night's sleep is important for both the parent and the child. Listed below are some strategies that can assist in making this activity less stressful for both parent and child and encourage a good night's sleep.

Whenever possible allow the child to engage in active deep pressure activities throughout the day/afternoon, particularly if they have been sitting still in school all day. This can help them to calm and to tire before bedtime. Examples of suitable activities are bouncing on a trampoline, swimming, cycling, soft play, climbing etc.

Avoid rough and tumble play directly before bedtime, instead give the child time to calm by choosing suitable games and activities as listed below.

Give your child notice i.e. "half an hour until bedtime" or "you can play that game for another 5 minutes etc

Establish a bedtime routine and stick as closely as possible.

A warm bath with some calming oils such as lavender can be soothing before

bedtime. Using textured scrubs and/or textured flannels can help to calm as can wrapping the child snugly in a towel following the bath.

A massage, back and/or head rub prior to bedtime can also help to calm.

Wrapping the child snugly in a blanket prior to bedtime or sitting them in a bean bag while you read their bedtime story can also assist in calming the child before getting into bed.

Provide comfortable pyjamas for the child, you may need to experiment with different ones to get it right. Some children with proprioceptive difficulties may feel more secure wearing tighter clothes at night i.e. leggings, leotards or stretchy pyjamas. Some children with tactile defensiveness can react negatively to some materials and again it's a matter of trying different materials to get it right. Also be aware that lace trims, labels etc can be irritating to the child with these difficulties.

Read bedtime stories in as calm as voice as possible.

If tolerated encourage the child to listen to some calming background music when settling for the night, Mozart can be very

Using soft comfortable sheets such as flannelette can assist the child in sleeping better; again some children can find crisp cotton sheets scratchy.

Using a heavy blanket on the bed or a sleeping bag can help the child to feel more secure in bed and to settle to sleep.

Placing their beds against a wall rather than in the middle of a room can also help them to feel more secure. Sometimes it helps if they can press their feet against the wall or their head against the headboard.

Ensure that the bedroom has the right lighting for the child i.e. blackout curtains can help to reduce light stimulation for the visual sensitive child and use of night light can help if the child dislikes the dark.