Bedtime Routine

Everybody can benefit from having a good sleep routine – even grown-ups! A good sleep routine needs to be planned well in advance. Consistency and firmness are also key.

A good routine is important to help children to develop better sleep habits. You must be consistent when you implement a new routine, your child's sleep patterns may appear to become worse before they get better as they may try to resist new changes that you make. Parents often give up when implementing a routine as they feel that it isn't working, you need to give any changes at least

2 weeks in order to see results.

Here are our top tips for establishing a good bedtime routine

- Do the same thing at the same time each day, including waking your child at the same time each morning, this will strengthen their body clock. We know this is hard on a Saturday and Sunday, but it is also very important!
- Switch off computers and televisions an hour before bedtime, these can be very stimulating activities and can hinder a good night's sleep. Screen activity can also interfere with the body's production of the sleep hormone melatonin!
- Offer quiet activities that are motivating to your child. Fine motor skill activities are perfect to aid relaxation e.g. Lego, jigsaws, colouring in, threading etc.
- Give your child warnings that bedtime is approaching, you may use a visual timetable to show them what is going to happen next or timers to let them know how long they have left before bedtime.
- If your child enjoys being bathed then you should include this within your routine. A bath 30 minutes before bed is perfect for aiding sleep. It is the slow decrease in body temperature after getting out of a bath that makes us feel sleepy and helps us to go to sleep.
- Say goodnight; tell your child 'it's night time, go to sleep'.
- Leave your child to fall asleep by themselves if possible.
- Wake them up at the same time each morning to help to strengthen their body clock.