



Creating a relaxing bedtime routine

Set a gentle bedtime routine

Having a bedtime routine and a set bedtime can help your child to understand what to expect and how they should behave. A healthy routine can begin 30 minutes to two hours before bedtime with activities to help them wind down, this could include:

- a warm bath
- brushing teeth
- a bedtime story
- clean pyjamas and nappy change (if needed)
- low lighting or a nightlight
- goodnight cuddles and kisses

Sticking to that routine every night will help your child to settle and give them the time to calm down before going to sleep.

Limiting screen time

Studies have shown that a constant lack of attention from parents can make babies and children feel stressed. In the world of technology that we now live in, it is very easy to become distracted by our mobile devices, catching up with emails and messages from friends at the end of the day, switching off to the basic needs of our children.



National Day Nurseries Association

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It is becoming more and more common for young children to settle themselves to sleep using screens. Research shows that the light on screens impacts on the quality of children's sleep, and this affects their behaviour.

If your baby or child enjoys some screen time during the evening, try and finish screen time before putting your baby or child to sleep and consider singing nursery rhymes or sharing a story book instead. This will improve the quality of your baby or child's sleep and make them feel less cranky during the day.

Reassuring your child

As simple as it sounds, it is crucial that you make time to give your baby or child love and affection each day. Cuddles and kisses and saying, 'I love you' at bedtime helps your baby or child to feel secure. This makes your baby and child feel confident and less frightened of changes throughout the day.

Some tips for you:

Self-care – spend some time each evening to unwind, too much screen time late at night can affect your sleep too. Think about other ways to help you unwind, for example do some exercise or take a warm bath. If you are calm and rested, your baby or child will be too. If you are overworked and overtired, your baby and child's behaviour will reflect this.



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Happiness – give yourself a pat on the back at the end of each day. Juggling jobs and parenting isn't easy. Don't be too tough on yourself; you are doing a great job. Enjoy this time and be happy.

You could use a reward chart such as the Bing Bath and Bedtime Reward Chart & Stickers to reinforce good behaviour at bedtime...and make it more fun!

About the contributor...

NDNA partnered with Acamar Films, producer of the award-winning pre-school series Bing, to bring parents some helpful tips and suggestions to support them during the ups and downs of children's transitions.

NDNA are the national membership organisation and the voice of day nurseries in the UK: the people behind the people who care, and champion the best for our children. By providing early years training, advice and guidance, we give your nursery the edge, an advantage that makes it the best it can be. Visit ndna.org.uk



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