

## ESTABLISHING SLEEP ROUTINES TO SUPPORT REGULATION

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- **Develop regular daytime and bedtime schedules.** Getting ready for sleep starts in the morning. Keep regular naptimes. Be mindful of the activities you schedule during the day; overscheduling your child can lead to bedtime challenges.
- **Establish specific cues and routines around bedtime to set the stage for sleep.** Plan to end your routine where the child sleeps.
- **Create a relaxing and pleasurable bedtime routine.** Include time for connection that supports a sense of security and emotional closeness (a warm bath, story time, rocking, snuggling, deep pressure, soft music, nurturing touch/massage).
- **Respect individual sensory needs.** For some children, a bath can be too stimulating at night and is better in the morning.
- **Avoid television and screen time close to bedtime.** The intensity of stimulation is too arousing and interferes with settling to sleep. Eliminate television from the bedroom!
- **Avoid highly stimulating activities in the evening.** It can take two to three hours for internal autonomic arousal to reset to a calmer state for sleep. If your child is a movement seeker, be sure to provide opportunities for intense movement and deep pressure in the afternoon. Provide calming movement in the evening.
- **Determine a comfortable room temperature for your child.** Cool temperatures generally support sleep.
- **Make accommodations for weight and texture preferences.** Some children prefer to be tightly tucked in or have a heavy blanket; others will resist covers.
- **Be aware of environment sounds that may disturb your child's sleep.** If possible, select a bedroom away from a busy street and other activities in the house. A white noise machine can be helpful for some children who are easily disturbed by random sounds during the night.
- **A dark space without visual distractions is often best.** Televisions, glowing clocks, phones and computer screens should be avoided. Blackout blinds that block light can be helpful. A night light is fine, if that helps your child feel safe.
- **Create a sense of boundaries.** If safety is an issue, install a toddler alarm or a Dutch door.
- **Don't cry it out.** Children with sensory regulatory difficulties generally do not respond well to the "cry it out" method. It is important to be sensitive and responsive to the individual needs of your child and to your own needs.