

# ASD Family Help

Pembrokeshire

Registered Charity No. 1135718



## 5 Top Tips Time Sleep

Many children and young people have sleep issues. But for those with autism, sleeping well might be particularly difficult. The impact this can have both on the young person and family can be huge. Lack of sleep can lead to poor attention skills, behaviour difficulties and can become more hyper. Anxiety levels can also increase. As mentioned in the Sleep Charity manifesto 'sleep plays a major factor in our health and wellbeing'.

1. Keep a sleep diary and create a good sleep routine, which is consistent every night. This helps our young people to predict what is going to happen each night which helps them feel safe and less anxious. Going to bed and getting up the same time can really help.
2. Create a relaxing environment – allow no screen time as part of your routine. Beware what works for your young person, do they prefer darkness or small amount of low light, some noise or silence. Check the temperature of the bedroom 16-18 degrees is just about right. The bedroom needs to meet their sensory needs. A bath/shower ½ hour before bedtime helps prepare the body for sleep.
3. Make sure the bed and bedding are comfortable – there is a range of ideas that you can do to create a safe bed environment. Such as stretch sheets, bolster cushions overhead bed tents. For older children do avoid naps during the day as this can disrupt your normal sleeping pattern and make it difficult to fall asleep.
4. Some bedtime snacks (banana's/milk) can be good as part of your sleep routine, however, do avoid squashes especially blackcurrant and caffeine (some fizzy drinks contain caffeine) as this can cause discomfort during the night and wake them up.
5. Exercise – having some exercise during the day, especially outdoors activities, can make it easier for children and young people to fall asleep and children who exercise tend to have deeper sleep. However, try to avoid exercise too close to bedtime as it could make sleep more difficult. It releases feel good hormones and can wake us up. Leading up to your sleep routine try and have calm and relaxing activities.

Having a good sleep routine can really help, we are hoping to gain some funding so we can help more families develop a sleep program and teach them techniques around the gradual/rapid retreat as well as lots of ideas and strategies.