

# How To Promote Better Sleep

A tip sheet for parents in the autism and/or intellectual disability community

## Do

- 01  Use blackout shades or curtains
- 02  Keep the bedroom temperature between 18 - 21 degrees celcius
- 03  Try a white noise machine or a fan
- 04  Encourage 20 minutes physical activity earlier in the day (ex. walk, bike)
- 05  Brush teeth half an hour after dinner instead of just before bed if dental hygiene is problematic

## Don't

-  Have bright lights on in the bedroom
-  Allow screentime within 1 hour of bedtime
-  Keep distracting toys or electronic devices in the room
-  Have large meals or sugary drinks before bedtime as these can cause restless sleep
-  Make the bedroom's decoration too exciting or stimulating

## Enjoy Some Relaxation Time Right Before Bed

Consider including the following relaxation techniques into your child's bedtime routine:

- 1 If your child likes to cuddle, try gently rubbing their back or running your fingers through their hair
- 2 Progressive muscle relaxation: Ask your child to 'tighten all of the muscles in their feet' for 10 seconds and then relax, continue doing the same moving up the body
- 3 Gentle stretching in bed: Encourage your child to try some gentle laying-down yoga poses
- 4 If your child is interested, try reading a guided meditation for sleep out loud or listen to a sleep meditation app together

### Medical Options:

If your child is on prescription medication, consult with their doctor or pharmacist to determine the optimal time to give the medication to prevent sleep issues.

Consult with their doctor to see if your child should try melatonin and when in the day it would be best to give it to them.

If your child regularly snores loudly or sounds like they are choking, ask their doctor about being referred for a sleep apnea assessment.

