



Understanding
your child

Solihull Approach

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Leaflet for
parents

Foundations of sleep

Confidence and trust in the relationship

You need to think about the parents' feelings about separation and also the child's feelings about separation. The child can only separate easily from a parent if there is enough closeness in the day. There needs to be confidence and trust in the relationship. When you think about how to give your child a good sleep pattern, begin by thinking about what goes on in the day

Self-regulation

It's important for children to learn how to fall asleep. If you know how to get to sleep to start with, you know how to get yourself back to sleep if you wake up in the night. This is a key difference between someone who has a sleep difficulty and someone who hasn't. The child with the sleep difficulty has probably not developed a pattern of self-regulation that allows them to go back to sleep if they wake.

Helping children to settle easily

One of the many reasons why children sometimes can't settle easily to sleep is that they may be worried or angry about something that has happened in the day (it's the same when we are adults!). If there are issues between the child and parents that happened in the day and that are still around, then it can be difficult for the child to get to sleep. This is particularly true for young children.

Developing a good sleep routine for you and your child

The golden rules

- To develop a good nighttime routine it is best to start by trying to get a good daytime routine.
- It helps if things happen in the same order at roughly the same time each day.
- If your child can't separate easily from you, try to have 5–15 minutes each morning and afternoon when both of you feel more separate (i.e. not giving each other full-on attention).
- A good bedtime routine could be: tea–bath–story–bed.
- Once your child goes to bed he should be expected to stay there.
- It helps if your child is put into his bed awake so that he learns to fall asleep without you. This will help him to know how to get back to sleep if he wakes during the night.
- You may need to return to reassure your child from time to time.
- A book or favourite soft toy can be available if your child is unable to go to sleep straightaway.
- After about six months a baby may not need milk during the night – water is less tempting to wake up for.
- If your baby wakes in the night try not to take him out of his cot unless you have to.

Solihull Approach 'Understanding your child'

'I like peace and quiet and to sleep in darkness. Worries from things that have happened during the day can keep me awake and I also find it difficult to sleep if I'm in an unfamiliar bed.'

www.SolihullApproachParenting.com

Solihull Approach is part of the government's CANparent (Classes and Advice Network) parenting voucher scheme.