

# Healthy Living

## Under 2's – Quality Sleep



Sleep is an essential part of all our lives, and it is just as important for our bodies as eating, drinking, and breathing. It is vital for maintaining good mental and physical health. As adults, we would have all experienced the negative factors poor quality sleep has on us, such as decreased focus, lack of energy and irritability. It therefore goes without saying that quality sleep is crucial for our 0-2 years olds as it significantly impacts their physical, cognitive, and emotional development.

In order to promote good quality sleep practices in your setting it is essential that practitioners have a sound understanding of why quality sleep is so important for a child's overall development. At the same time, practitioners must be able to demonstrate confidence and competence around safer sleep practices.

### **TASK 1**

Within your team, review the list below and evaluate your own practice. Discuss why each statement promotes positive quality sleep for 0- 2-year-olds. Does it reflect what you are already doing now?

- The sleep area is calming and quiet, dimly lit and free from distractions. The children are provided with comfortable, safe, and clean sleep equipment such as cots and soft sleep mats which all adhere to the EYFS and safety standards.

- The sleep area maintains good ventilation, and the temperature is not too hot or too cold, the temperature is between 16- 20 degrees Celsius. A room thermometer is available for practitioners to regularly check room temperature whilst infants are sleeping. It is always located at the same height next the cots to ensure the reading reflects the temperature where the babies are sleeping.
- The setting follows a consistent sleep schedule tailored to each child's individual needs and routines from home. Practitioners adapt the schedule as needed, providing a balanced and flexible approach that supports each child's well-being.
- Practitioners incorporate calming activities before children go to sleep, such as reading a story and listening to soft music.
- Practitioners ensure infants are wearing comfortable clothing, are clean and dry and have been fed and winded before settling them down to sleep.
- Practitioners promote babies and toddlers to self-soothe and fall asleep independently. Parents are encouraged to do the same at home. They help children learn to settle themselves to sleep which fosters independence and helps them feel secure. They are supportive and responsive, ensuring that each child is given the time and reassurance they need to feel comfortable. For example, the infants can select a comfort teddy or one of their own from home to take to sleep with them.
- Practitioners ensure dummies are clean and are in good condition. They avoid attaching dummies to a baby's clothing with strings or clips. If a dummy falls out while a child is sleeping, they do not put it back in their mouth unless the child wakes.

- Practitioners are trained in sleep safety practices and understand the importance of quality sleep for the children.
- Staff provide personalised care and are attentive to each child's sleep cues and needs. For example, rather than sticking to a fixed schedule, they watch closely for signs that a child is tired, such as rubbing eyes or becoming quiet, then help them rest when they require it. This way, each child gets the right amount of sleep at the right time for them.
- Practitioners maintain daily communication with parents regarding their child's sleep and keep them informed of any changes in routine. Parents are encouraged to feedback on their child's sleep routines at home and practitioners adjust sleep routines if necessary.
- Managers conduct regular assessments and monitoring of the sleep routines and practices in the setting and feedback accordingly identifying any areas that require development.

Ensuring you have quality sleep provision in your setting is crucial. It is important to remember that every child will have unique sleep needs and patterns, what works for one baby may not necessarily work for another. Factors such as individual temperament, sleep rhythms and comfort preferences may vary. All infants require a personalised approach with sleeping as it impacts their overall well-being, growth, and development.

## **TASK 2**

Refer to the check list below and consider ways on how you can enhance your sleep provision:

- Am I provided with somewhere to store my personal items from home that help me sleep, such as designated basket or cubby?

- Can I select a soother to take to sleep?
- Can I select a comfort toy or teddy to take to sleep?
- Am I provided with freshly laundered sheets and blankets?
- Am I provided with a firm, well – fitting mattress?
- Do all mats and mattresses have a fitted clean sheet on before I am placed to sleep on them?
- Does the room I sleep in feel cosy, and provide me with a sense of security?
- Is the room I sleep in well-organised with minimal clutter, creating a serene environment?
- Are there clear pathways for the adults to move around without disturbing me whilst I sleep?
- Do the adults ensure there are no objects or pillows in my cot that could cause a risk to me?
- Am I closely supervised when sleeping and do adults check on me regularly?
- Do practitioners notice when I am tired and place me safely down to sleep?
- Do practitioners recognise the potential risks of allowing me to fall asleep on the floor, on a bean bag or in a baby bouncer?
- Does the room I sleep in have dim lighting or blackout curtains to minimise any distractions?
- Am I settled in a quiet environment and provided with soothing white noise if needed?
- Is there a comfortable temperature maintained in the room I sleep in?
- Am I placed on my back to sleep as recommended in safer sleep guidelines?
- Are adjustments made if I am having difficulty settling or staying asleep? Such as an adult calming and comforting me in a rocking chair.
- Am I okay to rest in my sleep space, even if I don't need to sleep?
- Is my sleep routine accounted for – can I sleep when I need to, or is there assigned sleep time in the daily routine?

## Useful links and resources:

- [Why is sleep important \(cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk\)](https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk)
- [How Much Sleep Do Children Need in the Early Years? | Under 2's | Teach Early YearsThe science of healthy baby sleep - BBC Future](#)
- [Creating an Ideal Sleep Environment for Your Baby \[a.k.a. The Baby Cave\] — Wee Bee Dreaming Pediatric Sleep Consulting](#)
- [Nursery World - EYFS Best Practice: Working with babies part 2 – creating the right environment](#)
- [Nursery World - Nursery Equipment: Sleep Time - Zzzzz...](#)