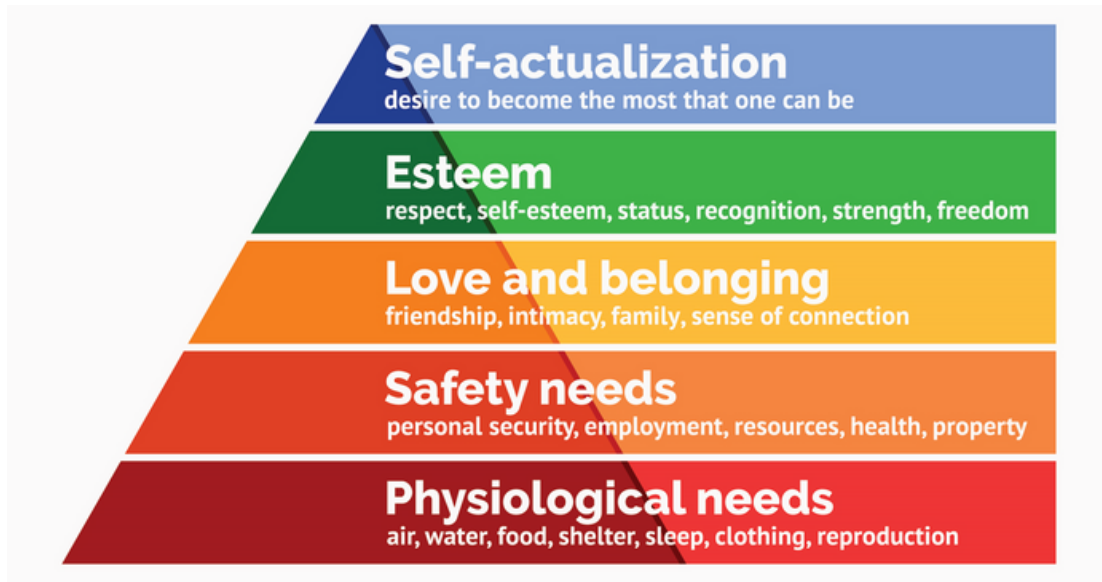


# WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?



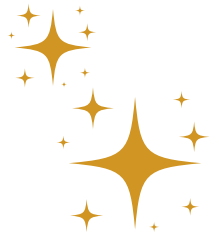
**Sleep is extremely important to support children's development both physically and mentally. Establishing good sleep patterns can help children to meet their full potential.**

Listed below are just a few of the symptoms of sleep deprivation in children:

- \* Growth or hormone issues
- \* Concentration difficulties
- \* Mental health issues
- \* Lowering of the immune system
  - \* Hyperactivity
  - \* Weight gain
- \* Behavioural issues
- \* Difficulty remembering things

Parents who are disturbed by their child's poor sleep patterns are also likely to suffer from sleep deprivation.





## HOW MUCH SLEEP IS NEEDED?

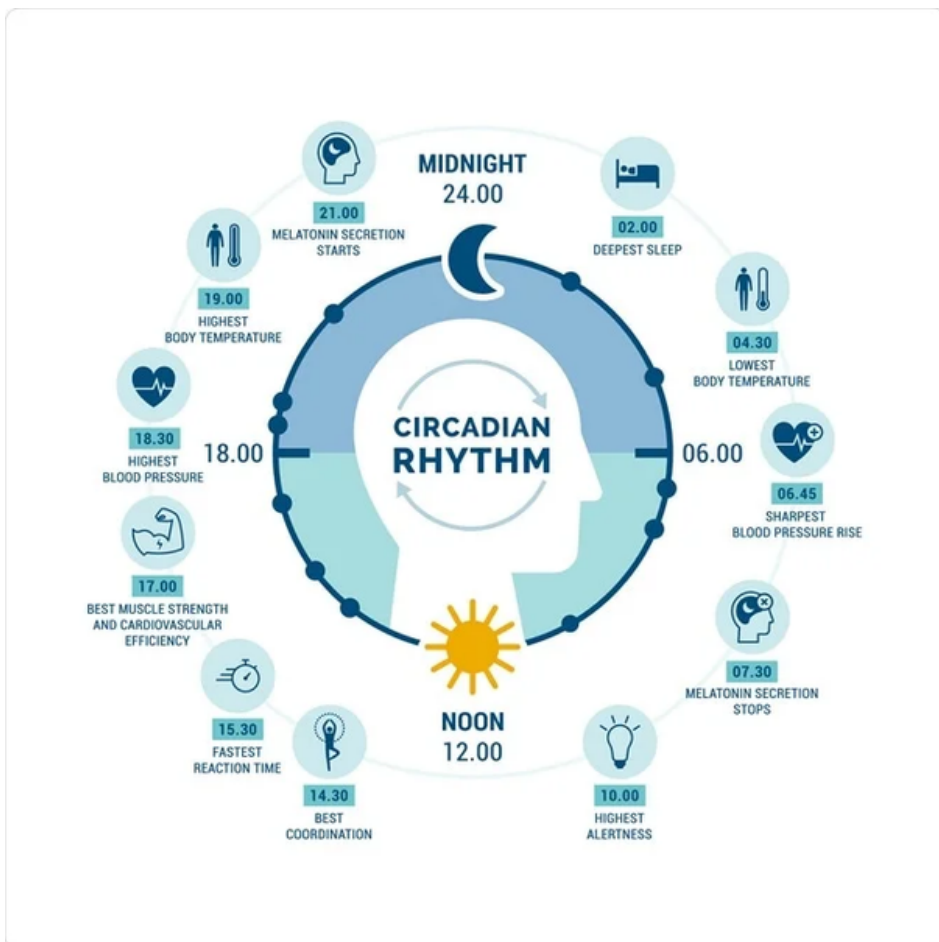
- 4 years- 11 hours 30 minutes
- 5 years- 11 hours
- 6 years- 10 hours 45 minutes
- 7 years- 10 hours 30 minutes
- 8 years- 10 hours 15 minutes
- 9 years- 10 hours

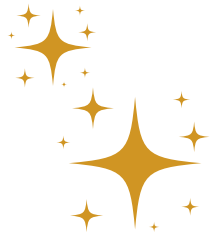
- 10 years- 9 hours 45 minutes
- 11 years- 9 hours 30 minutes
- 12 years- 9 hours 15 minutes
- 13 years- 9 hours 15 minutes
- 14-16 years- 9 hours

The times above are a rough guide of how much sleep is required. Some children differ in the amount of sleep they need, some needing more and some needing less.



## OUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM





# SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe healthy sleep habits or behaviours you can practice that may help improve your ability to fall asleep and remain asleep through the night. Establishing and practicing good sleep hygiene throughout the day impacts both the quality and quantity of sleep you get each night.



## ROUTINE



- Routines are hugely important for healthy sleep. Going to sleep and waking up at the same time everyday helps with our sleep-wake cycle. Our bodies get into the same routine and ensure we are waking up in the right stage of sleep.
- A sleep routine helps a child to know what is expected of them before bed
- Use the same routine every day- keep it the same at weekends.
- Make sure bedtime is realistic, if your child isn't falling asleep until 11pm there is no point starting a routine at 6pm. If your child isn't settling until late you may need to gradually move their bedtime, bringing it forwards by 15 minutes every three nights until you reach the desired time.
- A routine can start 30 minutes to two hours before bedtime, and can include activities to help wind down, such as a warm bath/shower or reading a story.
- Including a warm bath or shower in the hour before bed can help induce sleepiness as the body temperature rises and falls.

## EXERCISE



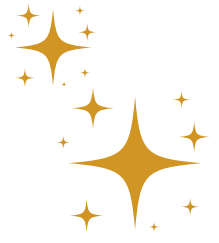
Children may have difficulty in falling asleep if they have been inactive throughout the day. Encouraging your child, where possible, to undertake sports and to play outside can help to burn off energy and enable your child to feel tired at the end of the day. Avoid exercise right before bed as this can increase body temperature, this will make it difficult to fall to sleep.

## FOOD AND DRINK



Caffeine is a stimulant that prevents sleep, and can cause your child to stay awake for longer and to settle to sleep less easily. Eating a large meal before bedtime can prevent sleep. However, some foods can be helpful in helping your child settle to sleep – some 'sleepy foods' include warm milk, bananas, honey and oats





# SLEEP HYGIENE

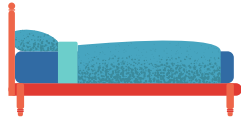
## SCREEN-TIME



The use of screens (such as televisions, mobile phones and tablets) close to bedtime can prevent falling to sleep. They produce light that is good at suppressing natural hormones, like Melatonin, in the brain that cause sleepiness. Try to reduce screen time in the hours before bed and avoid screens at least 1 hour before sleep. If your child uses these devices to help them fall asleep, consider replacing this routine with a bedtime story or playing soothing music.



## ENVIRONMENT



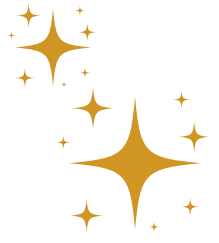
Think about the temperature of the bedroom- being too hot or too cold can cause us to wake. Consider if the environment is noisy and causing disruption. The colour of the bedroom can be over-stimulating, try to use calming colours. Lights/ curtains- consider if light in the bedroom is affecting the body clock- using blackout curtains or a simple small nightlight if your child doesn't like total darkness. Shadows- is there anything in the bedroom that is making your child worry- help them solve this problem. Try keep the bedroom just for sleeping, our brains can associate different areas with sleep. If the bedroom is a play area/study area try distinguish between the two by packing things away before sleep. Avoid working on the bed as we want to associate the bed with sleep only.

## SELF-SETTLING



If your child is routinely waking in the night, it is important that they learn to self-settle rather than seeking a parent or joining a parent's bed. This can be difficult to enforce, and may be emotionally challenging – both for child and parent – but it is important to stick with it. Reinforce the message that it is 'sleep time' and we need to be in bed- ask your child to go back to bed or return them to bed. This may need to be repeated several times each night, but it is important that your child learns that they will receive the same response from you each time.





# SLEEP HYGIENE

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



Used for stress, anxiety and to help with sleep. The process of tensing and relaxing one muscle group at a time. Often used to help with insomnia (inability to sleep) as it creates mental calmness as a result of physical relaxation. This skill can be learned by children or adults if practiced every day for around 10 minutes.

1. Tense the muscles of your toes and feet. Concentrate on feeling them scrunch up as tightly as possible. Hold for four to 10 seconds, inhaling as you do so.
2. Exhale and completely release the tension in your muscles. Breathe slowly through your nose and out through your mouth for another 10 to 20 seconds, focusing on feeling that muscle group and your body sink down. (Don't worry about the clock or being strict on timing; the point here is to relax.)
3. Repeat step 2 for the rest of your muscle groups: calves, thighs, hips, butt, core, back, shoulders, biceps, chest, forearms, hands, neck, around the eyes, and jaw. (If you prefer, you can do PMR in the reverse order, moving from the head down, or in any other sequence.)
4. As you move through the muscle groups, notice any areas of your body that holding extra tension. Try maximally squeezing and then releasing, as many times as necessary to fully relax.

## WHAT CAN WE TRY NOW?

