

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

9-15TH FEBRUARY 2026



Switch off to Recharge

Sleep Better and Unlock your Best Self

This year our theme is: **Switch off to Recharge**

Sleep Better and Unlock your Best Self



This year, we're encouraging families to **SWITCH OFF** screens before bed so children can **RECHARGE**, sleep better, and wake up feeling happier, healthier, and ready to learn.

This Children's Mental Health Week we will explore how to

Sleep Better and Unlock your Best Self

Why Switch off to Recharge?

Using digital devices before bed can make it harder for children to relax and fall asleep. The blue light from screens tells the brain to stay awake, which can lead to poor sleep and tiredness the next day.

When children don't sleep well, it can affect their mood, behaviour, and learning at school. A calm, screen-free bedtime routine helps children settle, sleep better, and feel ready for the next day.



Does your child...

Regularly use screen (tablet, phone, TV, console) within an hour of bedtime?

Struggle to fall asleep or stay asleep during the night?

Become upset or angry when asked to come off a device ?

Find it hard to concentrate, is tired and hyperactive the next day?

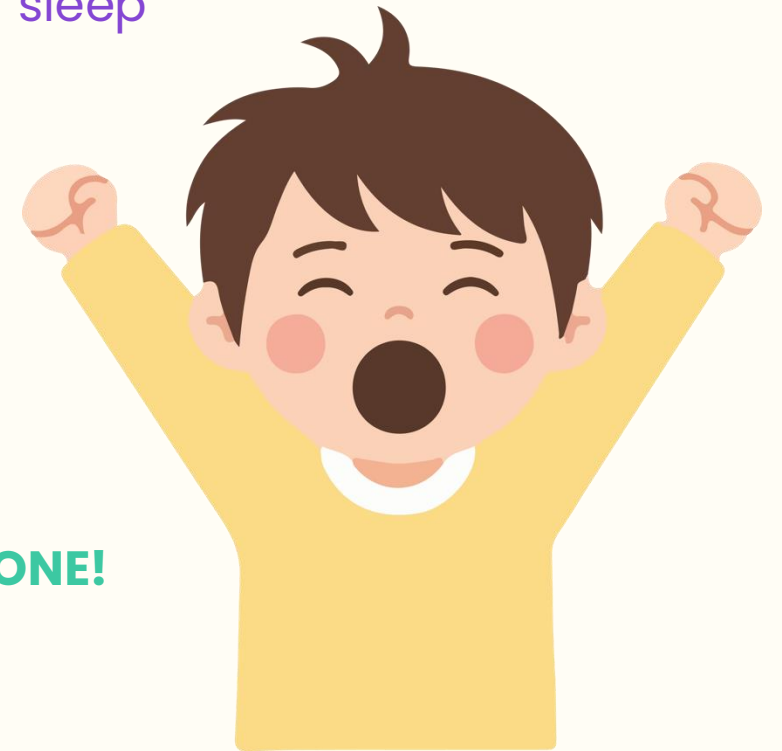


These can all be signs that your child may be experiencing sleep difficulties linked to device use

The Numbers Behind Sleep

- Around **1 in 3** children experience sleep problems several times a week
- Around **4 in 5** children with SEN struggle with sleep regularly
- More than **1 in 3** children aged 6–11 get less than 8 hours of sleep
- About **1 in 7** children sleep 7 hours or less each night

If you are struggling with your child's sleep, you are not ALONE!



Screen Use and Wellbeing for Neurodiverse Children



Children who are neurodiverse or experience anxiety may use digital devices as a helpful way to support routines and manage emotions, and these tools can be an important part of their day.

By using devices in a balanced and mindful way, especially around bedtime we can support healthy sleep, encourage positive connections, and help children feel calmer, happier, and more settled overall.

Sleep Needs According to Age

NHS RECOMMENDATIONS

3 TO 5
YEARS OLD

10 TO 13 HOURS (INCLUDING NAPS)

6 TO 12
YEARS OLD

9 TO 12 HOURS

13 TO 18
YEARS OLD

8 TO 10 HOURS



When Children Have a Good Night Sleep, they:

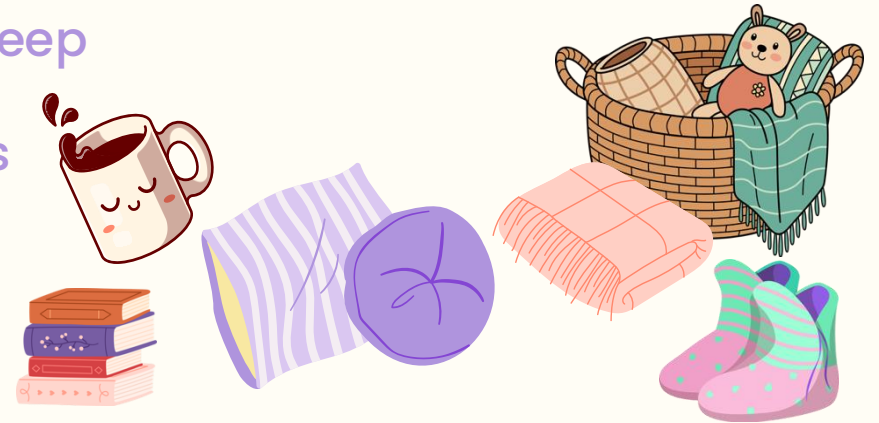
- Grow
- Have improved mood
- Strengthen their immune system
- Feel less anxious and can manage big feelings
- Have better concentration and are 'ready to learn'
- Look fresh faced – beauty sleep is a real thing!

Fact: Sleep needs are personal, look for signs of sleep deprivation to work out your child's ideal number of hours sleeping

Circadian Rhythm

Your Child's Internal Clock

- Our bodies follow a 24-hour cycle that controls sleep and wakefulness
- Blue light from screens delays melatonin → harder to fall asleep
- Disrupted rhythm = tired mornings, mood swings, poor focus



Sleep Stages

Why Deep Sleep Counts

- Light Sleep → Deep Sleep → REM (dreaming & memory consolidation)
- Deep sleep = growth & brain repair
- Late-night scrolling reduces total sleep and deep sleep

Sleep Boosters

Sleep-Friendly Spaces

A calm, cool cosy bedroom environment supports good sleep. Soft lighting, tidy spaces, and comfort items (like a favourite teddy or blanket) help children feel safe, settled, and ready for rest.



Sleep Disruptors

Overstimulating Sleep Spaces

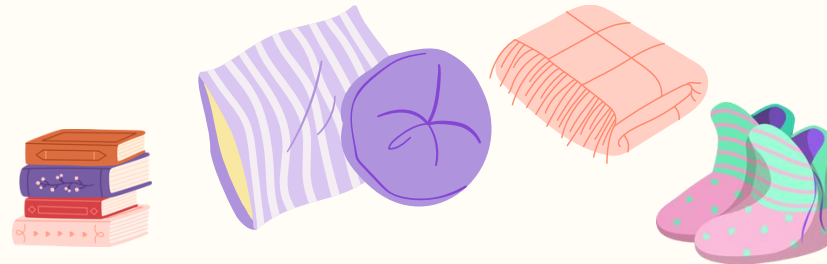
Noisy, brightly lit, or cluttered environments can distract children and make bedtime feel less relaxing. Rooms that feel busy or uncomfortable can delay settling to sleep.

Sleep Boosters

Comforting Bedtime Routine

Predictable routines such as a warm shower, brushing teeth, putting on cosy pyjamas, or choosing a favourite book sends a clear, comforting signal to the brain that it's time to unwind.

Sleep Disruptors



Unpredictable Bedtime Routines

When bedtime changes often or routines feel unclear, children may struggle to feel ready for sleep. Without a calming pattern to follow, their bodies can stay alert for longer.

Sleep Boosters

Slow Breathing or Stretching

Simple breathing exercises or gentle stretches help children release energy and relax their muscles. A few slow breaths or a “stretch like a star, curl like a seed” routine can make bedtime feel peaceful.



Sleep Disruptors

Lots of Energy Before Bed

Active play, big emotions, or stimulating activities close to bedtime can keep children’s bodies “switched on.” This can make it trickier for them to settle into a restful state.

Sleep Boosters

Connection Time

A few minutes of quiet time with a parent or carer helps children feel settled and secure. Gentle chats, re-capping the child's high/happy points of the day, reading together, calming songs or a simple snuggle can ease the mind and prepare the body for rest.



Sleep Disruptors

Disconnected Time

When children spend this time alone or focused on digital devices, they can feel less settled and more restless. Without these moments of connection with others, it can be harder for them to unwind and prepare for a restful night.

Activity: Read Together

What to do: Choose a short story or picture book and read aloud with your child

Why It's Calming: Reading slows the mind and reduces stress

Bonus: Builds language skills and strengthens parent-child connection



Activity: Sleepy Animal Stretches

What to Do: Ask your child to pretend to be an animal getting ready for a bed: 'Stretch like a cat/starfish/puppy

Why It's Calming: Light movement releases tension and helps the body relax before sleep

Bonus: Improves flexibility and body awareness and it's fun

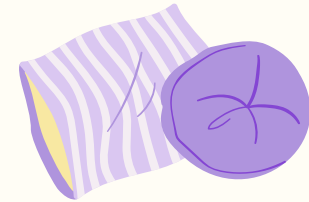


Activity: Listening to Soft Music or Nature Sounds

What to do: Play calming instrumental music or gentle sounds like rain or ocean waves

Why It's Calming: Soothing sounds lower heart rate and prepare the brain for rest

Bonus: Creates a peaceful and calm atmosphere



Activity: Connection Time

What to Do: Ask your child to share one good thing about their day

Why It's Calming: Promotes positive thinking and emotional security

Bonus: Strengthens parent-child connection

Want to find out more? Check out these resources...

References:

The Sleep Charity. Retrieved from <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk>

NHS Digital. (2022, November 29). *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England: 2022 follow-up (Part 2: Sleep, loneliness and health behaviours)*. NHS Digital. Retrieved from <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey/part-2-sleep-loneliness-and-health-behaviours>

National Sleep Helpline: 03303 530 541

Resources:

The Sleep Charity <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk>

Great Ormond Sleep Hospital – Paediatric Sleep Guide

https://media.gosh.nhs.uk/documents/GOSH_Sleep_Hygiene_in_children.pdf

<https://healthprofessionalsforsaferscreens.org/>

Thank You for Coming!



Any Questions?