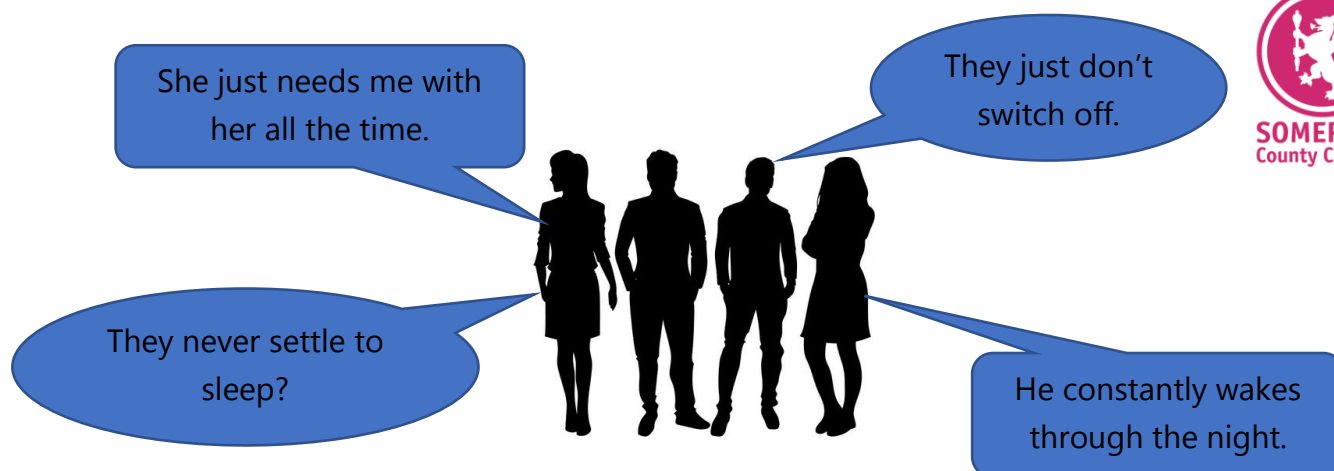




Help! My child finds it hard to sleep

Sleep. That elusive yet vital human need that is linked to so many areas of health and wellbeing. How much sleep you or your child is getting can become a key concern for parents. The National Sleep Foundation (2014) recommends that children get the following amount of sleep:

- Newborns 0-3 months = 14-17 hours
- Infants 4-11 months = 12-15 hours
- Toddlers 1-3 years = 11-14 hours
- Preschoolers 3-5 years = 10-13 hours
- School-aged children 5-10 years = 9-11 hours
- Teenagers aged 10-17 years = 8-10 hours
- Younger adults aged 18-25 = 7-9 hours

However, this can often seem hard to achieve, and the knock-on effect of sleep quality for parents, can be exhausting.

Sleep deprivation in children can cause increased hyperactivity and other behavioural problems. The Sleep Charity states that poor sleep habits from an early age can lead to long term sleep problems. In this booklet you will find lots of helpful tips and strategies to support sleep for your family.

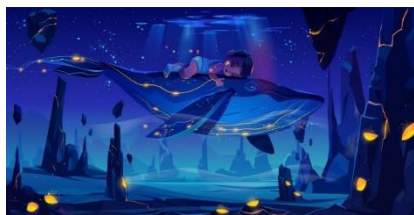
If you would like more information or support about how to support good sleep habits, you may find the following links useful:

[Home - The Sleep Charity](#)

[Home - The Sleep Council](#)

[Healthy sleep tips for children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)





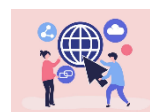
Sleep tips for children:

There are a number of tips and ideas that may help your child sleep better, which can help the whole family feel better. The National Health Service (NHS, 2021) suggest the following ideas for supporting sleep in children. You can use this as a checklist of things to remember before bedtime or a list to record what works for your child.

- Have a clear bedtime routine – having a story, bath, cuddle together then bed.
- Set consistent sleep and wake times and stick to these for all 7 days of the week.
- A warm (not hot) bath will help your child relax and get ready for sleep.
- Keeping lights dim encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone, melatonin.
- Once they're in bed, encourage your child to read quietly or listen to some relaxing music, or read a story together.
- You could also suggest your child tries this [relaxing breathing exercise](#) before bed.
- Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone and get them to charge their phones in another room or downstairs.
- Your child's bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet and tidy. It should be well ventilated and kept at a temperature of about 16 to 20C.
- Fit some thick curtains to block out any daylight. If there's noise outside, consider investing in double glazing or, for a cheaper option, offer your child earplugs.
- Give your child some time earlier in the day to talk through any worries they have or thoughts they want to share about their day. Try to keep any talk about worries separate to bedtime/sleeping space.



For more information see the Introduction to Sleep video support clip created by Educational Psychologists found here: [Wellbeing for Education Return – Training Videos for Education Staff | Support Services for Education](#)



What worked well?
What will you keep the same?

What needs to be changed?

What could you try instead?



Sleep tips for teenagers:

There are a number of tips and ideas that may help your teenager sleep better, which can help the whole family feel better. The National Health Service (NHS, 2021) suggest the following ideas for supporting sleep in teenagers:

Sleep tips checklist for teenagers:

- At least 1 hour of screen-free time before going to sleep.
- Regular exercise helps you sleep more soundly, as well as improving your general health.
- Cut out or encourage drinking less caffeine – found in drinks such as cola, energy drinks, tea and coffee.
- Let teenagers know that eating too much, or too little, close to bedtime can lead to an overfull or empty stomach. This can be a cause of discomfort during the night and may prevent sleep or cause episodes of waking.
- Encourage your teenager to get into a regular bedtime routine. Doing the same things in the same order an hour or so before bed can help them drift off to sleep. E.g. brushing teeth, reading a magazine, putting a song on.
- Ensure your teenager has a good sleeping environment – ideally a room that is dark, cool, quiet and comfortable.
- Offer time well before bedtime to share concerns/worries/thoughts on the day.

For more information see the Introduction to Sleep video support clip created by Educational Psychologists found here: [Wellbeing for Education Return – Training Videos for Education Staff | Support Services for Education](#)

