

SENSORY CHALLENGE EDUCATIONAL SERIES FOR HOME

Strategies

TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH
SENSORY CHALLENGES



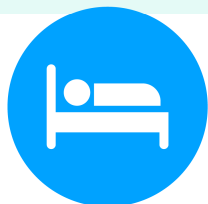
Difficulty
with Sleep

SENSORY CHALLENGE:

DAILY LIVING SKILLS

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH SENSORY CHALLENGES

SENSORY CHALLENGE: DAILY LIVING SKILLS



Difficulty with Sleep

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The **Does Your Child?** Section offers educational information about characteristics of children with the above mentioned sensory/behavior challenge. Your child may present with one or many of these characteristics.
- The **Try This!** section offers simple strategies for helping your child cooperate and develop skills. Not all suggestions are appropriate for every child and family. Only use strategies that apply to your child's age, developmental level, and situation. It is suggested to use this checklist while consulting with a professional who has explained and is monitoring these strategies.

»» Does Your Child?

- Avoid going to bed.
- Have trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep.
- Demand to sleep with you.
- Appear irritable due to lack of sleep during the day.

»» Try This!

DIFFICULT TO WAKE CHILD:

- Be sure to start early enough so that rushing doesn't create extra stress.
- Play suitable music to help arouse your child.
- Open the curtains and blinds.
- Offer an arousing smell or taste such as a lemon or orange.
- Slowly pull off blankets.

DAYTIME STRATEGIES:

- Establish an appropriate sleep-wake schedule.
- Determine if the length and/or timing of your child's daytime nap is disruptive to his night-time sleep.
- De-sensitize your child to getting into bed and falling asleep by practicing with putting dolls to sleep.
- During the day play separation games such as "Hide and Seek" and "Peek a Boo" to help your child get comfortable with missing you and knowing you will return.
- Help your child get comfortable leaving Mom and Dad during the day. Practice saying good-bye by leaving the house for just a few minutes then returning.
- A high activity level earlier in the day (5-6 hours before bedtime) helps a child sleep better. If he or she is too inactive in the first half of the day your child may not sleep well at night.

SENSORY CHALLENGE: DAILY LIVING SKILLS



Difficulty with Sleep

»» Try This!

EVENING ROUTINES:

- Avoid allowing your child to participate in a lot of random “running around” just prior to bed. It is too alerting. If too active just before bed he/she may not be able to fall asleep.
- Establish a strict bedtime routine. The routine may include a warm bath, listening to a book, quiet music, being rocked, tucked in, and finally lights out.

BEDTIME ENVIRONMENT:

- Let your child wear soft, comfortable pajamas.
- Provide “white noise” such as the sound of a fan.
- Soft music with repetitive rhythm can be very calming and help induce sleep.
- Provide soft bedding such as flannel or soft cotton sheets/blankets.
- Be sure sheets are not cold. Try placing the blanket(s) into the clothes dryer to warm them.
- Some children prefer heavy blankets that are folded under the mattress for firm coverage.
- Some children prefer sleeping inside a sleeping bag placed on the bed.
- Some children prefer being surrounded by heavy pillows or large stuffed animals.
- Some children are calmed by placing an article of a parent’s clothing inside the child’s bed during the night.
- Cuddling a transitional object such as a Teddy Bear may be helpful.
- Your child might sleep better if the top of his head is up against a firm surface such as the headboard.
- To help calm your child before bed try providing deep pressure to his body. Offer firm pressure or a “squeeze” to his/her back or limbs.
- Avoid rocking your child to sleep, driving him around until he falls asleep, or placing him in front of the television until he falls asleep. Doing so will be harmful in the long run. He/she needs to be placed in his crib or bed before he is sound asleep. Your child needs to learn how to cope with soothing himself to sleep. Your child may cry briefly, but this is not unusual.