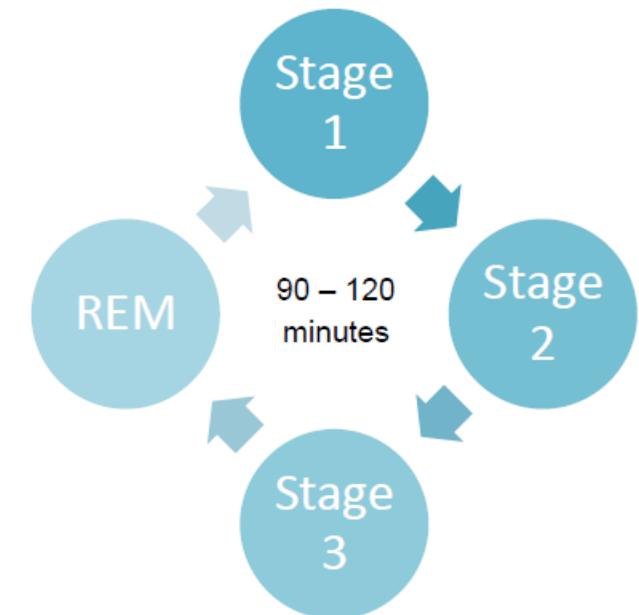


0-19 Service

Your child's sleep at 3 to 5 years



- Involve your child when choosing contents and wallcoverings to make the room their own personal space.
- Avoid using screens, such as: iPads, smart phones, computers, televisions, for at least an hour before bedtime, as the light can interfere with the production of melatonin; this is the hormone that makes us feel drowsy.
- Do not allow technology, such as hand held games, televisions, smart phones, iPads, in your child's room, as they can stop your child from falling asleep easily.

Stages of sleep

Stage 1 – in this stage we experience a light transitional sleep. This is where drowsiness and sleep begin.

Stage 2 – more stable sleep occurs. Chemicals produced in the brain block the senses making it difficult to be woken.

Stage 3 – this is deep sleep. Growth hormone is released during this stage. Most stage 3 sleep occurs in the first third of the night.

Stage 4 – Rapid Eye Movement (REM).

REM

This is where your eyes move around quickly behind your eyelids and your brainwaves look similar to those of someone who is awake.

Your child's development

- Your child will be very curious and ask lots of questions. They often want to be like you and will copy your words and actions.
- Younger children may struggle with their emotions; this may be displayed as tantrums.
- Your child will be developing complex social play with fantasy and drama. Your toddler needs to feel unconditional love.
- Consider the way you communicate with your toddler, remembering your child's age and level of understanding.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

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Your child's sleep

At this stage your child will be sleeping for around 11 to 13 hours each night.

At three years your child may have a 30 to 60 minute nap each day. They will probably have stopped napping completely by the age of five.

Their physical sleep is similar to an adult; however, emotionally, it is a very different matter.

Remember, all children are different with their own personalities - some will sleep longer than others.

Your child's sleep pattern

Starting school or nursery may make your child's sleep pattern worse in the short-term. This is because there are many new experiences and challenges which can affect their mental stimulation and, therefore, their sleep.

It is still completely normal for a child at this age not to be dry at night. However, your child may have disturbed sleep while you are supporting them to see if they are ready to sleep without nappies.

Nightmares are fairly common and night terrors occur in around 3% of children. For specific support, please speak to your Health Visiting team who can support you and your child.

Common ailments such as: coughs, colds, blocked nose, eczema, teething and chickenpox may impact on your child's comfort levels during the night; this will affect their ability to settle. Treating ailments will help your child settle back into their usual sleep pattern.

Change, such as the arrival of a new sibling or moving house, can impact on your child's sleep.

Trouble settling down

- Consider staying in your child's bedroom for a while if they need the comfort of you being there when they are settling to sleep at night.
- Make yourself comfortable whilst your child is settling down to sleep. Take the opportunity to read or use headphones to listen to relaxing music while you are waiting for them to settle.
- Gradually reduce the amount of time you are in your child's room.
- If they become distressed when you attempt to leave, try staying in their room longer and offering more comfort. This may take time but it is okay and will resolve.

Ideas to support you and your child

- Chat with your child at the end of the day.
- Make your child feel happy and secure in their sleeping environment.
- Respond calmly and lovingly, especially at night.

- Take your child's feelings and overwhelming emotions into account.
- When they have had a busy day at nursery or school, try moving their bedtime to a slightly later time and use this extra time to discuss their day and be together.
- Activities such as jigsaws, colouring and playdough are more calming and aid relaxation. A bath may also help.
- Actively involve your child in their bedtime routine, such as choosing bedtime stories.
- Having a regular bedtime routine plays an important role in making your child feel secure.
- Always end the day with praise and happy thoughts. Bear this in mind when choosing a bedtime story.
- A child at this age may become frightened of the dark. Having a night light can be comforting - red light bulbs are thought to be restful.
- Keep the room temperature at a comfortable temperature, ideally 16-18 degrees Celsius.
- Try lying on your child's bed to make sure it is comfortable.
- If they have a special comfort object for bedtime, keep a spare in case it gets lost or needs a wash.