



Sleep and Rest

Policy Name:	Sleep and Rest Policy
Adopted By:	Louise Farrow-Brookes
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1. Policy Overview

Sleep and rest is vital for all children, as it is the primary activity of the brain during early development.

Sleep is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and helps each child achieve their full potential, as it directly impacts their mental and physical development.

This policy ensures that children are safe and comfortable while they are sleeping at nursery.

All "Manager" responsibilities and actions referred to throughout the policy would usually be undertaken by the most senior person in charge, in the absence of the Nursery Manager.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1** The Manager must ensure that staff adhere to the Sleep and Rest Policy.
- 2.2** The Key Person, in partnership with parents/carers, must establish the child's individual sleep routines during the child's settling-in period, and this must be recorded in the child's personal documentation ("All About Me", Appendix 1).

We recognise parents/carers' knowledge of their child's sleep routines and will, wherever possible, work together to ensure that each child's individual sleep routines are met and regularly reviewed and updated with parents.

- 2.3** Staff must not force a child to sleep, wake, or keep them awake against their will, as this would be deemed detrimental to their well-being. However, staff may gently rouse children by turning on lights and making normal room-level noise.
- 2.4** The staff team must:
 - 2.4.1** Position children when sleeping in cots in accordance with this policy. There must only be one child in each cot. Babies must not have their heads covered with blankets or bedding, and there must not be any loose toys, pillows, or similar items in the cot that may pose a smothering or choking risk. Bibs and dummies on clips must be removed.
 - 2.4.2** Place cots 15 inches apart and away from radiators.
 - 2.4.3** Position sleep mats with adequate space to walk around them and ensure they are not stepped on. Children must be placed head-to-toe, so that no child's head is next to another child's head. Mats must also not be placed next to any toy or storage unit where items could fall onto the mat below.
 - 2.4.4** Carry out thorough 10-minute checks on all sleeping children and record these on the Family app. Nursery teams should use separate electronic timers to support this.
 - 2.4.5** Check sleeping babies who are in a separate sleep room every 10 minutes by entering the room and checking each baby's breathing and body temperature through touch, for example on their tummy.

- **2.4.6** babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot - this includes carrycots, moses baskets and travel cots (you may find it useful to check whether products meet the British Safety Standards...)
- children are placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface such as a cot, bed or suitable mattress on the floor.
- sleep spaces should only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child no higher than their shoulders to prevent head covering - alternatively, a well fitted baby sleep bag may be used (check the manufacturer recommendations before using a baby sleep bag)
- where blankets are used, the baby should be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in
- cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, loose bedding, bumpers, wedges or straps
- children should not get too hot or cold - the recommended room temperature for babies (those aged 12 months and under) is 16 – 20°C.
- children's heads are not covered
- babies under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep - all children must be frequently checked when they are sleeping
- children are always within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping
- A baby monitor can be used for children over six months of age, and you must ensure it allows children to be seen and heard at all times.

2.4.7 Ensure that mobile children sleeping on sleep mats or in Community Playthings Dream Coracles are in sight and hearing of a staff member. Manufacturers' guidelines state that Dream Coracles are not suitable for babies under 6 months.

2.4.8 Provide children with their own individual bedding and store children's individual bedding in a named basket or bag.

2.4.9 Maintain clean and hygienic sleeping areas, beds, and bedding. Bedding must be washed at least once a week. It is not necessary to wash bedding daily unless it is soiled or there is insufficient storage for bedding.

2.4.10 Clean sleep mats and cot mattresses with sanitiser spray between uses by different children.

2.4.11 Ensure sleep mats and cots are fitted with sheets before use. Shoes, bibs, hoodies, and zip jumpers should be removed before settling a child for sleep.

2.4.12 Conduct daily visual safety checks on cots. Any faults should be reported to the Manager immediately. Only safety-approved mattresses must be used. Cots must be removed immediately if identified as unsafe.

2.4.13 Conduct daily visual checks on sleep mats before they are used. Damaged or worn mats must be discarded.

Children Arriving at Nursery Asleep

- 2.5.1** Children who arrive at the nursery already asleep will not be accepted into our care. This decision is made to ensure the safety and well-being of the child, as it is not possible for staff to ascertain the child's condition upon arrival.
- 2.5.2** Accepting a child who is already asleep poses potential risks, including difficulties in monitoring their health, ensuring appropriate bedding and sleeping arrangements, and effectively addressing any emerging needs.
- 2.5.3** Parents or guardians are kindly requested to ensure that children arrive at the nursery awake and alert, ready to participate in the day's activities.

3. Procedures

- 3.1** Lighting must be appropriate when children are sleeping. Wherever possible, lights should be off or dimmed for sleeping children and turned back on for waking children. If this is not possible, lights will be left on to meet the developmental needs of children who are awake. Children should also be appropriately dressed during the summer months, possibly wearing their nappy only. Blankets can still be used to ensure the child feels comfortable while going to sleep. Blankets should be placed across the middle of the child while they fall asleep to allow them to keep cool. Air conditioning must be turned off while children are sleeping.
- 3.2** Staff must never prop children on cushions or place babies in bouncers or cots with drinking bottles.
- 3.3** Whilst most children over one will require a sleep after lunch, there should not be a designated "sleep time". Children should be encouraged to lie down and rest but must not be forced.
- 3.4** Excessive time must not be spent attempting to make children sleep with patting and rocking, and staff must not rock children vigorously.
- 3.5** If a child is not naturally starting to sleep within 20 minutes, they should be allowed to continue resting or choose to play. This does not apply to children under 2 whose sleep routine is to self-settle.
- 3.6** Children must not routinely be put in a buggy to sleep; however, it is acceptable for them to sleep in this position if they fall asleep naturally on a walk or outing.
- 3.7** If babies and children under the age of 2 fall asleep naturally in a bouncer or on a cushion, and it is assessed as safe to lift the child safely, they must be placed on a sleep mat or in a cot/dream coracle. Babies must never be placed in cots within a bouncer.
- 3.8** Staff should consider placing children and babies to sleep outside in a safe, sheltered area if a full risk assessment has taken place and all relevant procedures are followed.
- 3.9** Parents requesting a sleep limit must have this approved by the Nursery Manager and Key Person. Children under the age of 2 will not be approved for any form of sleep limit. For children aged 2 to 3, the minimum sleep limit will be one hour. Any shorter sleep may have a detrimental impact on the child's behaviour and learning.

3.10 Older children who may no longer require a daytime sleep must still have access to a comfortable and peaceful area. This should not necessarily be the book area, but somewhere they can experience quality rest and calm periods, such as a cosy corner.

4. Additional Supporting Information

Research shows that it takes around 20 minutes to fall into a deep sleep, and the optimum time for a child to rest and feel refreshed is a further 20 minutes.

When a child is sleep deprived, they may have difficulty remembering things as memory consolidation takes place during sleep. This may affect their ability to learn and may reduce levels of concentration.

The immune system may be less effective and, in severe cases, a child's growth can be affected.

A child may struggle to make and retain friendships as their mood can also be affected by poor or insufficient sleep.

Daytime sleep will help a child sleep at night. Lack of daytime sleep may cause the child to become overtired and stressed. When the brain is stressed, it releases cortisol, which interferes with the ability to relax and blocks the release of melatonin. An overtired child will be more difficult to settle and less likely to have a good night's sleep.

Refer to the NHS guidance leaflet and the following resources:

- <https://sleepfoundation.org/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/sleep-problems-in-children/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids/>
- <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>

5. Appendix

Appendix	Description
1	All About Me

6. Review History

Date Approved	Reviewed By
03/01/2023	Louise Farrow-Brookes
27/03/2024	Salma Khodabaksh
23/06/2025	Louise Farrow-Brookes