

Positive sleep associations for children

Sleep problems occur for various reasons. To ensure good sleep, children need a consistent approach to bedtime and sleep.

- We need to give the brain positive links to sleep. This includes a predictable bedtime routine and the same night time conditions all night long.
- When children learn their sleep skills, they will make associations with things, surroundings and sounds that act as prompts for sleep. These associations can be helpful and sustainable, or they become hard to maintain. For example, a special toy, comforter or dummy.
- Sometimes these associations are dependent on a parent or difficult to sustain. For example, requiring a parent to stay in the room until asleep, or needing to be cuddled to sleep when children wake during the night.
- Parents and care givers can help a child learn to have sleep associations where they don't necessarily need to have an adult's presence during the night.
- The response to settling at bedtime or for any night time wake ups is very important. Responses will either make the wakeful behaviour more likely to continue or will help the child learn better sleep skills.
- We all wake during the night. Most don't notice this. For those who wake fully, bear in mind what you do will affect the chance of the behaviour being repeated.



 **Hunrosa**