



6.6 Sleep and Rest

EYFS: The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
3.60

Policy Statement

At Sunrise Community Nurseries (Sunrise), we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep or rest to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment.

Staff at Sunrise are aware that although it might make life easier sometimes, children don't just fall asleep on command. We know that it's important for young children to get loads of sleep. Early education is sort of a transition zone for sleep schedules — it's when children start to age out of daytime snoozes and adjust to the full daytime wakefulness as adults.

Procedures

Children arriving at nursery asleep

For safeguarding purposes, Sunrise will not accept a sleeping child. Children need to be awake when they arrive. If they are sleeping, then staff will ask the parent to wake them up before leaving or are still onsite to ensure that they are well in themselves.

Sleep

The safety of babies sleeping is paramount. Our policy follows the advice provided by The Cot Death Society and Lullaby Trust to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death. We make sure that:

- Babies are placed on their backs to sleep, if a baby has rolled onto their tummy, we turn them onto their back again unless they are able to roll from back to front and back again, on their own, in which case we enable them to find their own position
- Babies/toddlers are never put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed
- Babies/toddlers are monitored visually when sleeping looking for the rise and fall of the chest and if the sleep position has changed
- Checks are recorded every 10 minutes and as good practice we monitor babies under six months or a new baby sleeping during the first few weeks every five minutes until we are familiar with the child and their sleeping routines, to offer reassurance to them and families.
- Babies and children are never left to sleep in a separate sleep room without staff supervision at all times

We provide a safe sleeping environment by:

- Monitoring the room temperature
- Using clean, light bedding/blankets and ensuring babies are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating



- Only using safety-approved cots or other suitable sleeping equipment (i.e. mats) that are compliant with British Standard regulations, and mattress covers are used in conjunction with a clean fitted sheet
- Only letting babies sleep in prams if they lie flat and we have written permission from the parent/carer
- Not using cot bumpers or cluttering cots with soft toys, although comforters may be given where required
- Keeping all spaces around cots and beds clear from hanging objects i.e. hanging cords, blind cords, drawstring bags
- Ensuring every baby/toddler is provided with clean bedding labelled to them and working in partnership with parents/carers to meet any individual needs for example if a child prefers to sleep in a sleeping bag, we will ask parents/carers to bring one from home
- Cleaning all bedding as required and at least weekly
- Transferring any baby who falls asleep while being nursed by a practitioner to a safe sleeping surface to complete their rest
- Having a no smoking policy.

Parents share information about their child's sleep routine on their 'All About Me' form on their initial visit, and as this changes over time, there is two way communication between the parents and the key person. If a baby has an unusual sleeping routine or a position that we do not use in the nursery i.e. babies sleeping on their tummies or in a sling. We will explain our policy to the parents/carers and not usually offer this unless the baby's doctor has advised the parent/carer of a medical reason to do so in which case, we would ask them to sign to say they have requested we adopt a different position or pattern on the sleeping babies form.

We recognise parents knowledge of their child with regard to sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure each child's individual sleep routines and well-being continues to be met. However, staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake against his or her will. They will also not usually wake children from their sleep.

Individual sleep routines are followed rather than one set sleep time for all children. We create an environment that helps to settle children that require a sleep for example dimming the lights, using soft music, where applicable whilst ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of the children that do not require a sleep and ensure they can continue to play, learn and develop. This may involve taking children outdoors or linking with other rooms/children.

Staff will discuss any changes in sleep routines at the end of the day and share observations and information about children's behaviour when they do not receive enough sleep.

Sleep vs Rest

In 2018, a study* suggested that when we try to *enforce* sleep, everyone ends up more frustrated than rested. In the study, researchers looked at early education settings that had mandatory sleepy time, but no alternate activities for the non-sleepers — and they measured the level of stress hormones in children throughout the



day. They found that if young children can't fall asleep, but feel the pressure to do so, the effort of laying quietly for an hour or more can be quite draining for them, and can raise their overall stress levels. This defeats the purpose of sleepy time altogether. [*https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-22555-8](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-22555-8)

As Sunrise, staff talk about 'rest time' rather than 'sleep time' as children don't always follow the tidy guidelines of a development manual. There's any reason why a three-year-old might not be sleepy during sleep time: Maybe they're too excited because of an upcoming birthday. Maybe they're all wound up thinking about what it'd be like if they opened a hot dog restaurant with Daniel Tiger. Or maybe they're just not tired today. And if that's the case, we do not pressure children to sleep.

Alternatives to sleep

At Sunrise, we make room for children to rest however suits them best. We do this by providing quiet, calming, alternate activities so that children have another way to recharge if they're not feeling sleepy or for those who wake up a lot earlier than the others.

This avoids the conflict of trying to wrangle children to sleep, a situation that just creates extra stress for the practitioners, and results in stressed-out, poorly-rested children.

This also offers a productive outlet for our non-sleepers. Having quiet activities saves children from having to lay still and quiet while others sleep, which can challenge little ones' self-regulation skills.

Reviewed: February 2023	Next review date: February 2024
Signed on behalf of the nursery: <i>Mikki Parkes</i>	