

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP FOR YOUR ADHD CHILD

Steps for ADHD Sleep Success





Hi

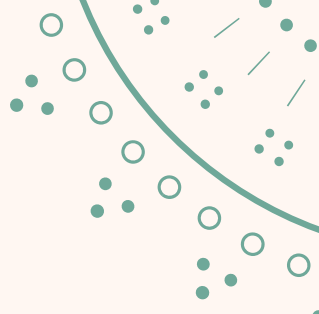


I'm Jade and founder of Beyond The Stars – Jade Sleep Zammit Sleep Coaching! As a mum of two – I have been in that place of extreme sleep deprivation whilst managing the juggle.

My mission is to help families through sleep challenges, I want families to feel rested and little ones to be content! I love finding solutions to suit their little ones and whilst helping the parents thrive beyond exhaustion

ADHD is something close to my heart and my family. And I have been there through the bedtime battles, and anxieties in child sleep. From toddlerhood and beyond, it can be hard have our child rested when they struggle to get to sleep themselves. I hope you love these steps to success – and ready to reach your goals!

Jade



ADHD and how it affects sleep

The day to day juggle is REAL!

Not only that, but our bodies and wellbeing take a huge knock with sleep deprivation. Did you know that in those moments where we become more snappy, irritable and impulsive emotions – that we are reacting exactly how our bodies are designed to when sleep deprived. Our “chimp” like part of the brain takes over, meaning it overrides our more “human/rational” part of our brains! Which of course leads to many feelings and emotions at the back of that...

This brings a stress cycle as adults and children - as when we react in such a way, it makes us more easily frustrated, and when we react that way it brings us even more negative feelings. This is where lack of sleep can directly impact our mental health. We need sleep for positive mental health, and optimal brain function and capacity.

Sleep and our Brain

When we sleep - it is like brain detox. It is when our brain gets rid of unwanted chemicals - which is why we wake up feeling refreshed! It focuses on cell division and replenishment, and plays a huge role in improving our immune system.



Sleep is Restorative Energy

Sleep is how we conserve our energy. It is restorative. If we think of our sleep like a "tank of sleep" - when this is diminished we are running on empty. There is little restorative sleep and energy, we become overtired, more irrational and less able to think clearly. When our sleep "tanks" are full - we sleep better, better rested, restored energy and ability to function better cognitively. And the same goes for our kids too. This is why when we sleep poorly, we instantly feel the physical effects - we feel sluggish, tired and unfocused - which also can intensify the ADHD symptoms itself!

Sleep Helps Our Bodies Regulate

In many aspects, our circadian rhythm, our immune system, and metabolism. More importantly for ADHD children it supports regulation and concentration. It also reduces emotional distress, a more positive head space and decreased anxiety.

UNDERSTANDING ADHD SLEEP

6 Steps to ADHD Sleep Success

SLEEP & ADHD

CHILDREN WITH ADHD CAN MORE COMMONLY EXPERIENCE -

- Shorter Time Asleep
- Longer time to fall asleep after lights out
- Later bedtimes
- More sleepy during the day
- More disrupted sleep
- Varied wake and sleep times
- time sensitive
- Anxieties and over thinking
- Medication has potentially made it worse.



I. THE BODY CLOCK

Our circadian rhythm is how our body distinguishes cycles of night and day within a 24 hour period. This regulation of sleep is driven by the homeostatic physiology of our sleep and wake cycle. These work together to form the habits of when we are awake and asleep.

Often with ADHD, our circadian rhythm can be different from the norm. Often driven by later nights, and later mornings and this changes our natural sleep pattern.

During our night-time sleep cycles, we usually enter 5 different cycles of sleep. Non-REM sleep being deep sleep, and REM (rapid eye movement) cycles being more active sleep.

ADHD is a 24 hour disorder, which means it can show symptoms and have bigger impacts even during sleep cycles. It may make sleep cycles more prominent. For example, as we enter REM stages of sleep, we are likely to fully wake rather than join the cycles together.

That being said - for the most part they can be linked. And often if there is something to “wake for” or there is a stimulant to be had when this happens, we are at a much higher chance of waking rather than sleeping through!

For example - your child knows once they wake they run through to their parents room, or have access to something - this is enough to disconnect their sleep cycles!

2. SLEEP PRESSURE

Over-tiredness is one of the most common reasons for night awakenings.

Overtiredness can impact: - Short Naps - Night Awakenings - Fighting Sleep and Bedtime - Early Rises

This could be happening with a wake window which is too long in their day - for example an early start to the day, and a later bedtime.

Top Tip - although as parents we watch for sleepy queues, the truth is that once the sleepy queues start there is very little time before overtiredness hits. So, the secret is to catch them before they hit this and following age appropriate Wake Windows - and let's be honest, often with ADHD they rarely show the tired signs!

This is where we can really focus on sleep pressure. Often ADHD children are more time sensitive, and disruptions to natural rhythms can be highly impacted or missing their ideal timings can do the same.

Then we have Under-tiredness.

This is less common - but can happen if little one is getting too much sleep within a 24 hour period. You may find this nearer the time that their wake windows are changing. For example, bedtime becomes too early.

We can't force the sleep - our bodies have to need it!

Top Tip - Varied Wake and Sleep times can reinforce the battles and poor sleep. For example, lie ins at the weekend. Keep your wake time consistent!

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3. FACTORS AFFECTING SLEEP

From toddlerhood to teens - there are many factors that can impact our children's sleep..

Emotions

Stress, Anxiety, Overwhelm,
"buzzy brains"

Adolescence

Hormones, delayed sleep onset is
common during these years.

Alerting Activities

Social media, Games

Lighting

Blue lights massively effect
melatonin levels and staying in a
deep sleep. Or too much light is
stimulating.

Environment

Temperature - often being too
warm or changing.

Sensory

Blankets, covers, too noisy, too
quiet.

4. GOOD SLEEP HABITS

What can help promote good sleep habits with our child?

Connection

Darkness

Processing the day
ahead of bedtime

Audiobooks/Sounds

Reading

Routines

Weighted Blankets

Routine & Consistency

Meditation

Regulated Parents

Avoiding Sugar/Caffeine

Regular Sleep Cycle

Positive Affirmations

Anxiety Management

5. CHANGES DURING ROUTINE/SETTLE



The ideal maximum length of a bedtime routine sits at around 30/40 minutes. So not to overstimulate with an extensive routine. This also helps keep the routine very rhythmic and it acts as a cue for sleep. If there a lot of changes during the routine, this could bring on a bedtime battle!

Routine/Reward charts can be a great positive encouragement for keeping the routine and positive boundaries

6. CONSISTENCY

Consistency is truly the key. We want to avoid inconsistencies in the settle. If sometimes we feed them to sleep, other times we bring them in with us, and sometimes we try to settle them in their own beds then this often leads to MORE upset and boundary pushing from our little ones – because they don't know what is coming next and frustration kicks in.

When we have a consistent settle approach – they become more content!! They know exactly how the settle or resettling is going to go.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO FOR OURSELVES?

1. Self Talk & Self Belief

Start and End your Day the right way - Positive Affirmations Write and Say how you want your day ahead to be, the kind of traits you want to show as a person. "I am patient", "I accept only positive thoughts today", "I am calm and can see through the tough times".

Affirmations are a self-help strategy used to promote self-confidence and belief in your own abilities. Your brain sometimes gets a little mixed up on the difference between reality and imagination, which can be surprisingly useful. And these techniques are great and essential when making changes to our little one's sleep or for getting through the day!

Positive Self Talk to our brains can help:

- Improve our mood
- Increase Motivation
- Boost self esteem
- Help solve problems with a clearer mind
- Boost optimism
- Combat negative thoughts



2. Setting our own goals and thoughts daily can help make a huge shift!

Goals are important as we make any changes, but we also have to allow these to align with our core beliefs and visions.

I recommend including the following focus areas in your goals;

- Sleep Focus for your child
 - Bedtime Routines and Habits to optimise your own sleep
 - Affirmations and steps towards a growth mindset
 - Self Care – getting outside, limiting screen times...
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- The first step - is to write down your Gratitude and grateful feelings around these first. There is nothing worse than writing goals down, and then feeling you won't meet them and bringing negative emotions. Gratitude fixes all of this, so practice some simple Gratitude Statements for every step of your progresses! You can't feel grateful and negative at the same time! So this helps us reach our goals more positively and effectively.
 - You don't need a detailed plan, just a next actionable step! Find a goal buddy - whether that be a partner, friend or family member. We are most likely to achieve our goals (x10) with support and accountability.
 - Review your goals often to keep in alignment with them. These may change in time too, and that's ok!
 - Be Clear & Realistic, they can be as small or as big as you like but a clear vision is better than a muddy one.





GOAL ACTION PLAN

Sleep Goals

What are the key challenges when it comes to sleep Is it falling asleep? Frequent awakening? Struggling to get back to sleep in the night/ early morning?

If the lack of sleep is with your child having trouble sleeping – then write what these challenges are and what you want to see change.

What are the ultimate "Sleep " goals?

My Mindset Goals

What changes would you love to see? Or aspects to implement? E.g. daily gratitude, affirmations. This may also be making yourself accountable to include your self care - energy boosting lunches for work, water intake, podcasts on the commute to work, or reading a book before bed!

Action

How am I going to get there? How will it feel once my goals are met? How will my life change?

What can you implement from the above steps?

I hope this guide helps you in your first steps to sleep success. And if you are unsure where to start (and that's ok too!) then you can get in touch via email.

And I'd love for you to share your plan with me! Feel free to email it over to jadesleepnanny@gmail.com and we can discuss together.

JADE – SLEEP NANNY



BIO



When my son was born, my husband worked away and the sleepless nights were HARD. I was in survival mode! After our daughter graced us, she had a whole set of challenges including Reflux. Alongside toddler sleep challenges, we had our hands full.

With ADHD running in our family and children, I absolutely understand these challenges too.



I saw an opportunity to help others and I knew could make a big difference to families. My mission was that no one felt alone in sleep deprivation.



In 2021 - I went through intense study and qualified in Infant & Child Sleep and my business journey began! I also extended my studies recently to qualify as a ADHD Sleep Awareness Practitioner to provide additional support for families.

Since then, I have worked with professionals such as Lucy Shrimpton, Charlie Day and Lisa Johnson to learn more on sleep and building the best business possible for supporting families.

I stand for supporting others, educating, empowering parents, and showing them what is possible on the other side - The Gentle & Successful way.

Outside of business? – I love drinking coffee before the kids wake, exercising or out with my children! I love being outdoors, live music, and keeping busy!