

## Sensory Strategies for Sleep

Keep in mind that this will likely be a trial and error process, unless you strike gold and the first sensory strategy you try is the ticket. You can try a combination of these ideas, they are in no way going to over-stimulate your child. It just may take more than one idea or an alternate idea the next day.

- Deep pressure touch to arms and legs, also called hand hugs or squeezes.
- Try applying magnesium oil to the bottom of the child's feet at bedtime.
- A weighted blanket or heavy quilt folded up to increase weight and pressure. Tight fitting pajamas or compression clothing at bedtime are great too.
- A cuddle swing or hammock swing may be used as a cozy nest for sleeping. This is only appropriate for children old enough and able to maneuver around in the swing throughout the night and get in and out independently. The swing should hang close to the floor for safe and independent use.
- Gentle, rhythmical, and linear swinging in a cuddle or hammock swing or compression swing for at least 15 minutes before bedtime is a great idea.
- Try a rocking chair in a quiet, calm, dark place right before bedtime.
- If the child is small enough, gentle swinging in a blanket can be very calming.
- A lycra compression sheet is a great alternative to a weighted blanket.
- Provide an oral sensory tool.
- A vibrating pillow or hand-held massager placed under the mattress for a diffused vibration can be helpful. There are also vibrating mattresses available for purchase.
- Try inverting the head throughout the day and right before bedtime as well.
- Encourage joint compression and joint traction activities prior to bedtime, including head compressions.
- No screen time at least one hour prior to bedtime.
- Try the "tortilla roll up" in a blanket with added firm pressure (proprioception) from a large therapy ball by rolling the ball over the child's body .
- Wearing noise cancelling headphones or earplugs at night can be helpful for some children.
- Try a large bean bag or pillow cave with tons of pillows and blankets. This can be where the child sleeps, not just before bedtime.
- Try Bubble mountain...any resistive blowing activity will work as well, in the bathtub is a great place. Have your child create their own bubbles for the bath!

Be sure the room is free of distractions, light, or clutter. White noise or soft instrumental music is also a great tool. Sometimes a humidifier works as well. If possible, have the child sleep in their own space...even creating a nice cozy cave in a big walk in closet or possibly in a play tent filled with pillows and blankets is a great place for sleep. Canopy beds or the bottom bunk of a bunk bed can be helpful as well. Sensory kids like that defined and cozy space factor.

Adapted from: <http://asensorylife.com/sleep-challenges.html>