

SAFE SLEEP POLICY & PROCEDURE

Created by Rachel Traczyk, 3rd Jan 2024.

Updated 23rd Dec 2024

This Policy includes:

- Parent Partnership
- Sleeping babies
- Safe sleep environment
- Sleep aids

This policy applies to all employees. It is the responsibility for all employees to check on sleeping children and to maintain a safe sleeping environment.

The EYFS (2021) states, 'Sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots/bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that infants are placed down to sleep safely in line with latest Government safety guidance.'

Little Sparrows aims to ensure that all children have enough sleep to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Upon starting at the Nursery, we ask parents to complete the 'all about me & my family' form on their child's sleeping routine with their child's key person and this is kept up to date with good communication. We follow Individual sleep routines rather than one set sleep time for all children so children who may need morning or afternoon naps are supported.

We recognise each parent's 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. With this in mind, staff will never force a child to sleep or keep them awake against his or her will. Practitioners will also not usually wake children from their sleep unless children are beginning to be transitioned away from afternoon naps and this has been discussed with the child's parents.

For children who are reducing their nap times, it is recommended to have a minimum of 40 minutes, as this is one length of a sleep cycle however, we will work with each family and accommodate with what is best for individual children. Our practitioners will determine whether, children on reduced nap times may need longer if they are poorly or have had a reduced sleep the night before.

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

SAFETY CHECKS

- Upon leaving the room, Practitioners check that:
 - All the children are in a safe sleeping position
 - All children are breathing with their chest moving up and down
 - Children are not over heating
 - Do not have bedding covering their faces
 - The middle partition is free from equipment
 - Music is at a quiet volume
 - The temperature is monitored
 - The playroom door is propped open so staff can hear or see children wake.
- Checks are recorded every 10 minutes and as good practice we monitor a new baby sleeping during the first few weeks more regularly until we are familiar with the child and their sleeping routines.
- The best way to check baby's temperature is by putting a hand on the skin on their chest or the back of their neck. If their skin feels hot, slightly clammy or sweaty, this is a sign they are overeating and a layer of bedclothes or bedding should be removed.

SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN

Practitioners continuously ensure the room is a safe sleeping environment:

- Mats are spaced out and away from any toys, being aware of heated radiators and drafts under doors.
- In the sleep room, toys are tidied away, shelves are stacked safely and middle partition is clear from toys & equipment (as this could cause a fall from height)
- Spaces around cots and beds are clear from hanging objects i.e. hanging wire, cords, drawstring bags.
- A shoe box is used to store footwear (as shoes stored next to mats could cause a trip hazard)
- Monitoring the room temperature, applying extra blankets if required during winter or removing blankets in the summer (16 C – 20 C is recommended)
- 10 minute visual checks – we check each child is in a safe position and is breathing.
- Ensuring babies and toddlers are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating.
- Ensuring any clothing that could be a choking or strangulation risk is removed such as bibs or small hair accessories.
- Ensuring babies do not wear unsafe clothing to sleep such as hoods, bibs, scarfs and draw strings.
- Ventilation is important to reduce the spread of infection
- Are aware that the floor may be colder than to where a practitioner may be standing.
- Babies and children are left to sleep in a separate sleep room to the playroom with the door always propped open so staff can hear or see the children.

MATRESSES & BEDDING

- Children use a clean blanket (we recommended cellular blankets) or sheet in the summer.
- A firm and flat mattress (and waterproof mattress cover when using the cot) with a clean fitted sheet.
- Once asleep bedding must not cover children's faces. Non mobile babies must have blankets not above their shoulders.
- The surface of a mattress is firm enough that when a baby is placed on it, their head does not sink in more than a few millimetres because this could be a risk for overheating and suffocation.
- If a toddler is significantly coughing on a rare occasion, a thin pillow may be placed under the mattress to raise the head end slightly to ease breathing.
- We send all bedding home for cleaning each week.
- We store all bedding in separate pockets or bags to reduce the spread of infection.

SLEEPING BABIES (NON-MOBILE BABIES UNDER 1 YEAR)

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 syndrome (SIDS). We make sure that:

- Babies are placed on their backs to sleep with their feet to the bottom of the mattress.
- 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 do not wear unsafe clothing to sleep such as hoods, bibs, scarfs, hats and draw strings.
- Blankets are tucked into mattress sides, not above the shoulders to avoid pulling the blanket over their face and suffocating.
- It is recommended to parents that babies use cellular blankets or well fitted sleeping bags – not fleeces or thick padded blankets.
- If using a sleeping bag, blankets should not be used on top. Another clothing layer should be added or a thicker tog sleeping bag requested.
- Babies and toddlers are never put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed.

BABIES SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN THE COT

- When using the cot, a waterproof mattress cover should be fitted with the babies sheet securely.
- The cot is clear from toys, although comforters may be given where required.
- There are no hanging blankets over the cot or nearby hanging wires.
- We only use safety-approved cots and other suitable sleeping equipment (i.e. mats) that are compliant with British Standard regulations.

SLEEP AIDS

We create an environment that helps to settle children to sleep:

- The blinds are pulled down to dim the lights
- Soothing soft music is played
- The door is pulled to, to reduce noise
- Children have their own comforters
- Practitioners encourage self-soothing where possible
- Any patting is done in a soothing way

BABIES & TODDLERS WHO DO NOT NEED A SLEEP AFTER LUNCH

We maintain the needs of all children that do not require a sleep and ensure they can continue to play and learn. This usually involves linking with the pre-schoolers in the main room between 1-2pm. We ensure all babies, toddlers & pre-schoolers who do not sleep have their individual learning needs are met when setting up the room after dinner. For example making sure babies who do not sleep are planned for after lunch.

PRACTITIONER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To ensure every child is provided with clean bedding labelled for them and working in partnership with parents to meet any individual needs e.g. if a child prefers to sleep in a sleeping bag, we will ask parents to bring one from home.
- To check mattresses regularly to make sure they are still firm, clean and in good condition with no rips or tears. Any signs of damage to report to Management for replacement.
- To have good communication with parents to ensure sleep information is shared and safe practice from our policy is passed on i.e. Advising parents to bring in lighter bedding in the summer.
- To ensure good knowledge and practice of this policy and be aware of the risks of SIDS.

MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Replace any damaged mattresses immediately
- Ensure that any equipment used for the babies' sleep spaces has passed the necessary safety checks and that the manufacturer's guidance is followed.
- Ensure the team understand this policy and have safe working practices.

Associated Documents

- Lullaby Trust
- Risk Assessment
- Health & Safety Policy