

## REST TIME Environmental System

Rest time is a time where children rest quietly on either a bed provided or in a quiet area set up for children not using beds.

Rest times refresh children so that they can maintain their energy, focus, and ability to learn throughout the day.

Regulation often requires that a rest time period be provided, however, children are not required to sleep.

Children that need to sleep - will sleep. Children who do not sleep require access to quiet activities (e.g., personalized rest time quiet activity boxes).

There is no rest time or method that will suit all children at all times. The key to effective rest time is flexibility, adaptability, observation and knowing the individual needs and requirements of all the children.

- ◆ Avoid sugary foods and drinks as these excite the brain.
- ◆ Make exercise a daily habit. Children will rest more easily when they have had some exercise through the day. Exercise may help regulate the rest cycle.
- ◆ Try to resolve social conflicts well before rest time so children have a sense of serenity and calm.
- ◆ Model a tranquil, relaxing, peaceful mood.
- ◆ Be conscious and responsive to children's sensory needs at rest time - e.g., are children having difficulty filtering out sounds or light, is bed linen too irritating, does the smell of the bed linen upset them, are the sheets heavy or not heavy enough, can they regulate their body temperature with extra layers of clothing / less clothing, do they have difficulty positioning their body or knowing where their body is in relation to objects and people, can they lower their arousal level to reach the state of calm necessary for resting.
- ◆ Create a restful place for rest time - low light, quiet, and comfortable.
- ◆ Consider the layout of beds, positioning of the primary adult care provider in relation to children.
- ◆ Teach children where to position their beds - they will begin to place their beds in the same spot everyday independently.
- ◆ Have a consistent schedule, with rest time at the same time each day. Schedules help children feel secure in their environment, because they can predict what is going to happen next.
- ◆ Establish a fairly regular rest time ritual.
- ◆ Use the same rest time ritual each day.

- ◆ The rest time ritual may include:

Locating my name and picture on the bed time wheel

Finding my bed.

Taking off my shoes and placing them on the chair beside my bed.

Getting onto my bed.

Looking through my rest time box and selecting what to do.

Doing quiet activities from my rest time box.

Resting quietly on my bed.

- ◆ Use a series of pictures to do list to illustrate the rest time ritual.

- ◆ Make up social behaviour stories about rest time.

1. I have a bed. On my bed are my sheets. At one end of my bed is my pillow. My pillow is for my head. It is okay to lie between my sheets, with my head on my pillow. I rest my body and have a rest or I play quietly with the things in my rest time box. Resting helps my body grow.

2. My schedule shows me rest time.

I find my bed.

I rest quietly on my bed.

I lie down and rest my body or I play quietly with the activities in my rest time box.

- ◆ Help children understand the importance of rest by saying 'resting helps us to grow' or 'your body needs to rest to stay well'; 'Your body needs rest so you can have energy to play tomorrow. Rests helps you feel better, grow and be strong.'
- ◆ Children's rest time needs change over time, so remember that the rituals you establish today will not be the same one's you use a year from now.
- ◆ Respond to each child's individual needs for rest time.
- ◆ Make a smooth transition to rest time.
- ◆ Prior to rest time, keep stimulating activities to a minimum. Activities should begin slowing down well in advance of rest time.
- ◆ Have some quiet pre rest time activities - something that doesn't involve physical activity, isn't overly stimulating, and won't get children all excited.
- ◆ Have a group 'down time' ritual before rest time.
- ◆ Read relaxation scripts:
  - Pretend you are a fish and practice breathing big deep breaths with your mouth open.
  - Pretend you are a jungle animal having a sleep and breathe slowly and deeply.
  - Breathe in to the count of three. Then breathe out to the count of three.

- Breathe in as I sing 'This is the way I hold my breath, hold my breath, hold my breath. Breathe out as I sing 'This is the way I let it out, let it out, let it out.'
- Breathe deeply a few times, making ha, ha, ha sounds to clear the lungs.
- ◆ Provide some quiet time for child (such as reading a book, doing puzzles or listening to story). This may be an effective way of providing some down time for child while others sleep. You could set aside a separate area or simply allow child to engage in quiet time activities while on his bed.
- ◆ Read / play on CD player, child focused progressive muscle relaxation scripts.
- ◆ Read / play on CD player, child focused guided imagery.
- ◆ Play calming music - this may be lullabies, classical, soft rock or country music.
- ◆ Have white noise machine in the background - a radio set to static, an aquarium, a bubbling fountain, or a fan (not blowing directly on the children).
- ◆ Gentle pats, back rub or massage, or tightly squeeze feet, legs, hands and arms to help child relax.
- ◆ Encourage children to rest with a comfort object such as a favourite blanket or stuffed animal.
- ◆ It may be soothing for children to rub their hands over different textures as they settles down to rest.
- ◆ Read commercial story about resting; e.g., *Going to bed with Rabbit* (Barnet); *Time to Sleep* (Denise Fleming); *Time for Naps* (Jane Yolen and Hiroe Nakata).
- ◆ Have relaxing rhymes such as the following:
  - Rest time, elbows. Rest time, nose. Rest time, eyebrows. Rest time, toes.
  - Rest time, hair. Rest time, neck. Rest time, tummy. Rest time, knees. Rest time, feet. Rest time, fingers. Rest time, cheeks. Rest time, shoulders.
  - Rest time, head. Rest time, ears. Rest time, teeth. Rest time, ankles. Rest in bed.