

# Sleep and Rest



## Safe Sleep and Rest

*"During sleep there's even more activity and more learning going on in an infant's brain than an adult's." "Karmilloff – Smith (2010)"*

*"When young children are sleeping they are learning by consolidating information taken in during the day." Music (2011)*

Recent research on children's brain development highlights that when a baby is asleep their brain is busy learning. For this reason Grass Roots ensure every child is cared for by meeting their needs and using their own individual routines.

### Why Grass Roots has a 'safe sleep policy'

The idea behind our 'safe sleep' policy is to ensure all children and practitioners at the setting are safeguarded and protected in every way possible. The belief that implementing procedures for safe sleep could reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome formed the basis of our policy and mirrored the setting ethos that practitioners have an obligation to keep children safe.

Within our procedures we stipulate that if there is a group of children sleeping after lunch this gives our staff the opportunity to take their lunch breaks. Occasionally children who require sleep from the Paddock will come to the Fold as part of their after lunch routine. With the group of children sleeping two members of staff will stay in the room which is situated next to the office where there is always a senior member of staff. As children wake they might be taken by a senior member of staff down to the Paddock.

Staff are aware that even though they are taking their lunch break they still have a duty to care for the children and in case of an emergency will be available to help. Staff take their lunch in the room next to the Fold so they can hear if there is a problem. If staff are needed during their break time then their breaks will be extended accordingly.

### During safe sleep practitioners take into account:-

**Partnership with parents** – Detailed information sharing and smooth communication between the key person and the child's family is essential. Building a trusting relationship so close attachments can form will insure parents and practitioners openly discuss their child's sleep, any changes in routine and provide consistency of care. A child's sleep routine then remains individual and personalised.

Some parents may ask that children do not sleep close to the time of collection for fear that the child's sleep pattern will be disrupted. This needs to be an open conversation between parents and their key person to ensure that the child's health and wellbeing is at the forefront of all decisions being made. Therefore having an open, trusting relationship where discussions remain informal and valued and parents feel secure that the key person has the child's best interests at heart will assist with the individual development of the child.

Practitioner's at Grass Roots are confident and knowledgeable regarding our safe sleep policy which adopts the procedure that "children are allowed to sleep to their own individual routine anytime during the day." The child's key person will feedback appropriately to parents the importance of rest and sleep periods when attending Grass Roots.

### Does Nap Time Help Children Learn?

*Food for thought.....*The University of Sheffield & Ruhr University in Germany have been doing research into how children develop and retain skills they have recently learnt.

A group of 216, 6-12 month-olds were shown how to remove and manipulate a mitten from a hand puppet and given the chance to perform the actions again after 4 hours had passed and then again after 24 hours.

Children who had a nap for at least 30 minutes within four hours of learning the skill were able to actively remember the actions. Those who didn't have that nap within the 4 hours after learning struggled to remember the skill they were shown earlier.

Dr Jane Herbert from the University of Sheffield's, said, "These findings are particularly interesting to both parents and practitioners because they suggest that the optimal time for infants to learn new information is just before they have a sleep. Until now people have presumed that the best time for infants to learn is when they are wide-awake, rather than when they are starting to feel tired, but our results show that activities occurring just before infants have a nap can be particularly valuable and well-remembered.' 'This study however examined learning opportunities around naturally occurring naps and shows just how valuable activities like reading books with young children just before they go down to sleep can be.'

## Sleep Procedure

At the Grass Roots we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment. The safety of babies sleeping is paramount. We adopt a policy of practice recommended by The Cot Death Society to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death.

This includes:

- Babies are placed on their backs to sleep, but when babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they can be allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer to sleep
- Babies will never be put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed
- Babies/toddlers will be monitored visually when sleeping and will never be left in a separate sleep room without staff supervision at all times
- When monitoring, the staff member will look for the rise and fall of the chest, and if the sleep position has changed

We provide a safe sleeping environment by:

- Monitoring the room temperatures
- Using clean light bedding/blankets and ensuring babies are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating
- Only having Safety approved cots (or other suitable sleeping equipment, i.e. pods or mats) that are compliant with British Standard regulations, and mattress covers are used in conjunction with a clean fitted sheet
- Not using cot bumpers or cluttering cots with soft toys, although comforters will be given where required
- Keeping all spaces around cots and beds clear from hanging objects i.e. hanging cords, blind cords, drawstring bags
- Should a baby fall asleep while being bottle fed or rocked by a practitioner they will be transferred to a safe sleeping surface to complete their rest
- Having a no smoking policy.

An *'All about me'* information sheet is filled out by the parent when their child starts settling into the nursery and this is updated at timely periods to review.

We recognise parent/carer(s) knowledge of their child in regards to sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure each child's individual sleep routines and well-being continue to be met. However staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake against their will.

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.