



Sleep Plan for XXX Stone

XXX is a healthy 6-year-old little girl, who lives with her mum, dad and younger sister (XXX who is 2 ½). XXX's parents describe her as a sensitive little girl. A recent diagnosis of a Sensory Disorder has been given.

The daytime routine usually starts with a morning wakeup around 6.45-7 am, and then breakfast, following breakfast, XXX will get ready for school. XXX's nan takes her to school for 8.30 am, and either mum or nan will collect her from school at 3 pm. On non-school days, XXX will play with her toys. Dinner is around 4.30 pm, after which XXX will play with her toys and her little sister.

XXX loves watching kids YouTube, playing with her dolls and playing with her sister

The bedtime routine starts around 6.30-6.45 pm, with a bath (every other day) and then into pj's ready for bed. Once XXX is ready for bed one of her parents will read to her. Following storytime XXX will need one of her parents to lay with her until she is asleep, this can take between 20 minutes to 1 hour. During this time XXX will be fidgeting a lot and trying to engage her mum or dad in conversation. A recent attempt at XXX's parents of not laying with her at bedtime, resulted in a lot of tears and upset from XXX making the whole process far worse and XXX refusing to go to sleep. XXX insists on having a lamp on throughout the night as she does not like to sleep in complete darkness.

Sleep has never been easy for XXX, rarely self-settling and waking multiple times in the night, walking into her parent's room, needing assistance to go back to sleep.

During the day, XXX's behaviour has become increasingly difficult with many tantrums. If XXX does not get her own way, she will scream and shout and be rude. Sometimes the tantrum can lead to XXX being aggressive towards her little sister, although it is mostly just attempts at annoying XXX.

In addition, XXX refuses to carry out independent tasks, such as getting dressed by herself. And will often wet herself when she is at home, but never at school.



XXX is a fairly fussy eater, preferring familiar foods, however, 3-4 times a week XXX will have school dinners, where she will eat a slightly more varied diet than she will eat at home. XXX drinks plenty of water or milk throughout the day.

Aim's

XXX's parents would like her to learn how to settle independently and to stay in bed all night. With this, they are hoping that XXX will become more confident and her general behaviour will improve. In addition, they would like XXX to become more independent, for example dressing herself

Plan

Once children get to around the age of 3, teaching them to sleep better becomes more about the psychology of their behaviour rather than simply being able to teach them to sleep better. We need to find what works for XXX as a little person rather than a generic sleep training approach.

I am convinced that her tantrums are a lot to do with her broken sleep, and would expect her daytime behaviour to improve when she is getting consolidated sleep. Having said that, I also think we need to work together on her daytime behaviour as well.

Tantrums in early childhood do go hand in hand, however, as a child gets older, they do tend to lessen as they learn that rules and boundaries are in place. The best approach when helping a child deal with their tantrums (because they aren't pleasant for the child either) is to set some very firm boundaries. Children thrive on routine and boundaries, although they will always kick against those boundaries. Children without boundaries feel out of control and vulnerable.

I am not for one minute suggesting that XXX does not have any boundaries, I just wanted to explain the psychology behind the action we will be taking.

Rules and boundaries

We need to put in place some very strict rules around bedtime, however, rules on their own are far less effective if we don't give children a reason to abide by the rules. I am a firm believer in rewards rather than punishments. As humans we are pre-programmed to be reward-seeking



and therefore, rewarding a child for positive behaviour is part and parcel of being a little human. Rewarding a child does not necessarily mean a material reward, positive praise can be just as effective.

The trick is to find what 'reward' is going to work with XXX, this will be a bit of guesswork until we can get just the right thing for XXX as an individual.

I note that you have tried a reward systems before and found them not to be really effective. I will send you the link to my YouTube talk on how to make rewards effective.

Bedtime

Bedtime rules and boundaries will be key to making sure that XXX can learn to settle independently. However, we need to also be aware that XXX is naturally a sensitive little girl and therefore, initially I do feel we need a fairly gentle approach.

Preparation for bedtime is also key. It is far more difficult to get a wired child to sleep than it is to get a calm relaxed child to sleep. Therefore, I would ask that you do not let XXX watch any TV, tablet or screen for at least one hour before bedtime.

After reading about XXX's personality and noting she has a diagnosis of 'sensory disorder', as I have previously mentioned, we need a reasonably gentle approach but with consequences. I have added an information sheet on the gradual withdrawal approach. With this approach, it is super important that you follow it to the letter, or it will be far less effective.

I would like you to please buy a simple visual timer (unless you already have one) to enable XXX to see when it is time for things to happen.

Plan for bedtime

We need to explain to XXX now she is 6 years old it is important for her to go to sleep independently and stay in her bed all night. That you are going to help to do this. Explain to XXX exactly when you will be starting the new rules.

I would like to make a reward chart with XXX, to enable her to understand the new rules, but to also feel part of the process. Give her



the option of a few rewards and ask her to choose which one she would like at first. If possible either purchase the reward, so it is tangible and she is able to see it but not touch it (the video explains this in more detail). XXX may well kick against this by refusing to take part in the making of the reward chart, that's ok, you make it near her and make it look like so much fun that she will want to join in this time or, if not this time, on another occasion. We need to remember XXX's behavioural issues are fairly deep-rooted and we will not be able to change them overnight.

I would like you not to allow XXX to watch any form of screen for at least 1 hour before bedtime, please.

At bedtime, show XXX the reward and tell her that you know she will get her reward because she is such a good girl.

Take upstairs and read her stories, you can ask XXX to choose a book or two if you would prefer. There is absolutely no negotiation around this, whatever limit you set must be kept to please or this becomes a bargaining tool or a delay tactic.

Once storytime is over, set the timer for 2 minutes, this is the chance for you and XXX to have chat. Once the timer had gone off there is no more talking whatsoever. Explain to XXX that if she starts to talk, you will leave the room, but if she lays quietly you will stay. If XXX does start to talk it is imperative that you leave the room. If XXX starts to follow you, silently return her to her bed, if she continues to talk leave again and repeat the process. I will be on hand to help you with this process and manage her attempting to leave the room.

Once XXX is laying quietly in her bed, sit next to her bed, no holding hands etc just sitting next to her bed.

Once XXX is asleep, leave the room. I feel the extended amount of time it is taking for XXX to fall asleep is because her little mind is thinking of ways to engage you, and therefore it won't allow her to drift off to sleep. Once XXX knows this is no longer an option, I am hoping she will fall asleep more quickly.



Bedtime rules

1. No talking after the timer has gone off – consequence of talking is mum or dad leaving the room.
2. No getting out of bed until it is morning – consequence to getting out of bed is being silently returned to the room, multiple times and no reward.
3. No calling out in the night – the consequence is no reward.

Using the gradual withdrawal approach, we will need to be super consistent with the approach. I would say the reason this approach didn't work before, is that XXX didn't have any consequence for the screaming and crying as you moved further away. The consequence now for screaming and shouting, will be you leave the room immediately and therefore even less contact with you.

Daytime behaviour

I feel the best way to approach unacceptable behaviour in children is to ignore it unless it is likely XXX will harm herself or her little sister. If she is aggressive towards XXX, pick XXX up and leave the room.

When the unacceptable behaviour starts, explain to XXX 'that is not acceptable behaviour XXX please stop', if she continues, then leave the room or remove XXX from the room. I always find that leaving the room yourself is a better option, however, this isn't always possible. Even turning your back on XXX may do the trick.

It is important once you have asked XXX to stop the unacceptable behaviour, you then do not talk to her again. Children respond to any attention, even when it is negative attention like being told off. By ignoring the behaviour, we do not feed attention-seeking.

When XXX calms down and stops doing what it is you have asked her not to do, give her lots of praise, smiles and attention.

We also have to respond to good behaviour in a very positive way, even the small wins. XXX will then learn that good behaviour gets far more attention.



This won't be a quick fix to XXX's behaviour as it is a learning process, however, if you stick with the new rules and the new ways, the tantrums will significantly lessen, and any tantrums XXX does have should last a lot less time. Sometimes when children get themselves into a rage, they find it extremely difficult to get themselves out of it. Therefore, this will also be helping XXX to manage her own behaviour better. Hopefully giving her far more confidence.

You do not mention that XXX is behaving poorly at school, therefore, I would say she is capable and responds well to rules and boundaries set out by the school and her class teacher. This is a good sign.

Wetting

As XXX is only wetting at home, we know there isn't any physical reason XXX wets herself. Therefore, we can assume it is because she seeks your attention, or more likely, it is when she is engrossed in a game or a TV program. This is where the timer is also a good option, set the timer for an hour and every hour it goes off, take XXX to the toilet. She gets a sticker for every time she goes to the toilet whether or not she actually does a wee. Lots of good praise around this. I would anticipate you may get some resistance to this approach as XXX will not want to break off from her game or her TV program. Therefore, say to her OK, that's fine as you are a big girl you take yourself off to the toilet, however, if you do wet yourself, we will have to start using the timer to help you remember to go to the toilet. It needs to come across to XXX as it is there to help her not to punish her.

Independence

I think teaching XXX to get be more independent by getting her to dress herself in the morning may be just a step too far initially. Therefore, if you are OK, let's park this until we have the nights nailed and the reward system can then transfer to XXX being more independent.

Guidelines for Gradual Withdrawal Technique

Sit by your XXX's bed on a chair. It's important not to let XXX rely on you either you touching her or holding your hand as a way of going to sleep.



Touch is there to calm XXX, if they are constantly falling asleep with your touch, they will become reliant on that touch to fall asleep in the future.

Stay by your XXX's bed until she is sound asleep – do this for the **first three nights**. If XXX wakes in the night and comes into your bedroom, do not say anything to her, turn her around and walk her back to her room (please don't pick her up), follow the routine above.

Every three days you need to move your chair further away from your XXX's bed. If XXX wakes during the night, go to her, return to the chair until she is sound asleep, again remember not to let her become reliant on your touch to fall asleep.

Night four-six place your chair in the doorway so XXX can still see you and follow the routine above. This night might be the hardest, but it is important to stay consistent and continue with the routine.

Night seven to ten place your chair in the hallway but still so XXX can see you and follow the routine above.

Nights eleven to thirteen chair in the hallway where XXX cannot see you, follow the routine above.

Nights fourteen onwards just stand outside the door and sh, sh intermittently from the doorway.

Whichever parent or carer starts the settling, they must continue until XXX is asleep, it is OK to swap over should XXX wake up again, however, this parent must then be the one to see the routine through until XXX is asleep again.