

Check this template against your local regulations and your own policies before you use it.

SOP no.		Version		Effective date	
Owner		Approver		Review date	

Purpose

To make sure every child sleeps and rests in a safe environment, in line with current safe sleep guidance, and that sleeping children are checked often enough to notice and act on any problem straight away.

Scope

Sleep and rest for every child at the service, including babies, toddlers and older children, at set rest times and whenever a child falls asleep. It applies to every educator who settles or supervises sleeping children.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Educator supervising sleep	Prepares the sleep area, settles children safely, carries out and records every sleep check.
Room leader	Makes sure the sleep room can be seen into and supervised, and that the sleep check schedule is kept.
Person in charge	Trains staff in this procedure and in infant CPR, checks the records, and keeps the procedure in line with current guidance.
Families	Share their child's sleep routine and any medical advice about how their child sleeps.

Definitions

Sleep check: Going to each sleeping child to look at their breathing, skin color and position, not only glancing in from the doorway.

Safe sleep guidance: The national advice your service follows on how babies and children should sleep, for example from a health department or a safe sleep charity.

What you need

- Cots that meet your country's safety standard, and beds or mats for older children
- Firm, flat, well-fitting mattresses and clean bedding for each child
- A sleep room that is well ventilated and light enough to see each child
- The sleep check record and a clock or timer

Procedure

1. Prepare the sleep area

Check each cot is in good repair with its sides locked, and that the mattress is firm, flat and fits without gaps. Remove pillows, bumpers, loose bedding and soft toys from babies' cots, as your safe sleep guidance says.

2. Check the room

Keep the room at a comfortable temperature, with no cords, blinds or heaters within reach of a cot. Make sure it's light enough to see each child's face and chest.

3. Get the child ready to sleep

Change the child if needed, and remove bibs, necklaces, teething beads, hair clips and hooded or loose clothing.

4. Settle babies on their back

Place babies on their back, with their feet at the foot of the cot and their face and head uncovered, as safe sleep guidance in most countries advises. A baby who can roll both ways by themselves can be left in the position they choose.

Caution: Don't follow a family's request to settle a baby on their tummy or side unless a doctor has given written advice. Discuss it with the person in charge.

5. Follow the child's routine where it's safe

Use the settling routine the family has shared, as long as it fits this procedure. Never prop a bottle or put a baby to sleep with a bottle.

6. Check every sleeping child

Check each child at the intervals your regulations or policy set, and more often for babies and unwell children. Look at their breathing, skin color and position, and that their head and face are uncovered.

Caution: If a child is not breathing or is unresponsive, call for help, start CPR and call emergency services straight away.

7. Record each check

Write the time, the child's position and your initials on the sleep check record at every check.

8. Move children who fall asleep elsewhere

A child who falls asleep in a car seat, stroller, bouncer or on a cushion is moved to a cot or bed as soon as possible.

9. Offer rest to children who don't sleep

Children who don't need to sleep rest quietly for a short time, then do quiet activities. Never force a child to sleep or keep them lying awake for long.

10. Wake and hand over

Respect each family's wishes about sleep times where possible. Tell families at pick-up how long their child slept.

11. Clean the bedding and equipment

Each child uses their own bedding. Wash it at least weekly, and whenever it's soiled, and clean cot mattresses between children.

Records

- The sleep check record for every child, every rest time, kept for as long as your local regulations require.
- Each family's sleep routine and any written medical advice about how their child sleeps.
- Staff training records for safe sleep and infant CPR.
- Incident records for any event during sleep or rest.

Related documents

- Sleep and rest policy
- Incident, injury, trauma and illness procedure
- Childcare daily safety checklist

- Cleaning checklist (bedding and cots)

Revision history

Version	Date	What changed	Approved by