



REDUCING THE LIGHT GRADUALLY



Why Sleep in the Dark?

Darkness plays a key role in helping your child sleep well. When it gets dark, the body naturally releases a hormone called melatonin—this is what helps us feel sleepy and stay asleep. Light, especially artificial light from lamps, can block this process. It tells the brain it's still daytime, making it harder for your child to fall asleep and stay asleep.

A darker room helps:

- Your child fall asleep more easily
- Reduce night wakings
- Support a deeper, more restorative sleep

While a lamp might feel comforting in the short term, creating a darker sleep space sets your child up for better, more consistent sleep in the long run.

Step 1: Build a Strong Bedtime Routine

- Keep it consistent: Use calming activities like reading, a bath, or quiet music
- Add comfort: A favourite toy or blanket can help replace the reassurance the lamp provides

Step 2: Reduce the Light

- Lower the lamp: Move it further down or away from the bed to reduce brightness
- Do this gradually: Shift it every few nights so the change isn't sudden





Step 3: Change the Bulb

- Switch to red or orange light: These are less stimulating and support melatonin production
- Use a low light: Choose a low-watt bulb to keep the room dim and sleep-friendly

Step 4: Gradually Reduce Brightness

- Start lower: Swap to a slightly lower wattage bulb (e.g. 40W → 30W)
- Reduce slowly: Decrease the brightness every week by small amounts
- Phase it out: Once the light is very dim, begin turning it off for short periods before bed, gradually increasing until it's no longer needed

Step 5: Build Confidence Without the Light

- Celebrate progress: Praise your child as they manage with less light
- Encourage self-settling: Support simple calming strategies like deep breathing or imagining something relaxing to help them feel safe in the dark

Step 6: Monitor and Adjust

- Keep an eye on progress: Notice how your child is sleeping and how comfortable they feel as you make changes
- Be flexible: If they're struggling, slow things down or add extra reassurance

