



When children and young people display behaviours that challenge at night, specialist sleep equipment is one of a range of options to consider. A safe sleeping environment for a child or young person is essential. For a small number of children with extreme behaviours, this may mean using a piece of equipment that prevents them from leaving their bed independently. If the risk to their safety and/or those of others is higher than the risk of restricting their freedom to get out of bed, this can be appropriate.

For most children and young people, there are many strategies that can be put in place, tried and tested before investing in restrictive equipment. We would recommend considering the following first:

- Try to ensure that your child's sensory needs are met and sensory strategies are in place during the day and at bedtime. Your child's activity levels and regulation during the day will impact on their quality of sleep.
- If your child has a medical issue which impacts on their sleep, get advice from their medical professional.
- If your child has a learning disability or communication needs, they may need support to understand what is expected at bedtime. A visual timetable for the bedtime routine can be helpful.

If you do feel specialist equipment is needed to keep your child safe at night, consider the following:

If your child becomes dependent on a specialist bed, you may find that any changes to your routine e.g. holidays, visiting family are more difficult to manage.

As your child gets older, think about how you will promote more independent sleeping, so that they could attend a sleep over away from their specialist equipment for example.

Try to think long term about how you can help your child develop healthy sleep strategies for life. Rather than developing dependence on an expensive piece of equipment, use sleep strategies or environmental adaptations alongside this to ensure your child's sensory needs are met.

Here are some options for adaptations to beds as well as entire spaces

Cloud Cuddle

A bed tent that changes a standard bed into a safe place to sleep. Suitable for children and young adults who are easily disturbed or need to feel enclosed and safe. The child or young person can be zipped in, but a Cloud Cuddle is not suitable for those who kick or drop their weight against the side netting. Assembly: attach bed tent to mattress and bed, then pump up tent, takes 5 minutes.

<https://cloudcuddle.com/en/>

Safety Sleeper

An enclosed bed system designed to keep a child or young person safe at night. It comes in a suitcase, takes 30 mins to assemble and can be used on the floor or on top of a bedframe. It is more robust than a Cloud Cuddle, but not as robust as a Safe Space.

<https://safetysleeper.com/>

Safe Space

Designed for people with complex needs and challenging behaviours, a safe space can be used as a safe bedroom, playroom or chill out space. It is extremely robust and can be kicked, punched and headbutted. It fills the whole of a small room or part of a larger room.

<https://www.safespaces.co.uk/safespace/>

Creative Care

Their products have provided soft, safe spaces for sleep and play for many autistic adults and children and have also been used for people with challenging behaviour.

<https://www.creativecareltd.com/>

Other companies are available. It is usual for companies producing Safe Spaces to require an assessment by an Occupational Therapist before they can quote for a bed.

Use of any of the above can be considered a restrictive environmental measure. The RCOT Briefing "Legislation, policy and research related to housing for individuals with autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour" (June 2014) states that: "In cases where there is an immediate risk to an individual's welfare caused by challenging behaviour, long drawn out treatment interventions... must surely be used in conjunction with more instantaneous risk-reducing methods".

For more information and advice, visit The Sleep Charity at thesleepcharity.org.uk or contact us on info@thesleepcharity.org.uk

