National Institute of Construction Skills

SUPPORTING YOUR APPRENTICE

Fatigue and Time Management Parent Pack

About this Pack

This pack gives parents and carers ten simple tools to help an apprentice under 18 manage tiredness and fit work, training and life into the week.

Starting an apprenticeship is a big change. Early starts, physical work, travel and NICS Training Days all add up, and teenagers' body clocks naturally run later than adults'. Feeling tired in the first few months is common. Feeling exhausted for weeks on end is a sign that something needs to change.

How to Use this Pack

- **Do it together.** These tools work best when your apprentice fills them in, not when they are handed a finished plan.
- **Start small.** Pick one or two tools that fit the biggest problem right now. You don't need to use them all.
- **Review, don't police.** Check in every week or two about what's working, rather than checking up on them daily.
- **Keep it handy.** Print the templates and stick them on the fridge, or take a photo so your apprentice has them on their phone.

Tools in this Pack

Tool	Use it to...
1. Bedtime calculator	Work out a realistic bedtime for early starts
2. Week-at-a-glance planner	See where the week goes and spot overload
3. Night-before checklist	Take the rush out of early mornings
4. Wind-down routine	Get ready for sleep
5. Traffic-light energy check-in	Talk about tiredness and track patterns
6. Weekend recovery guide	Rest without wrecking Monday
7. Safe travel plan	Agree on getting home safely when tired
8. NICS Training Days and bookwork planner	Stay on top of training tasks
9. Conversation starters	Open up low-pressure conversations
10. When to get help	Find the right support in Queensland or South Australia

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 1: Bedtime Calculator

Work backwards from the time your apprentice has to leave home to find when they need to be asleep. Teenagers need around 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night.

Worked Example

Step	Time
Leave home	5:45am
Wake up (allow 30 min to get ready)	5:15am
Asleep by (8½ hours before waking)	8:45pm
Lights out	8:30pm
Start winding down (30–45 min earlier)	7:45pm

Your Apprentice's Plan

Step	Workdays	NICS Training Days
Leave home		
Wake up		
Asleep by		
Lights out		
Start winding down		

Talk about it: Is this bedtime realistic? What gets in the way of it?

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 2: Week-at-a-Glance Planner

This planner shows where your apprentice's week actually goes, so you can spot overload together without an argument.

1. Fill in the fixed commitments first: work hours, travel, NICS Training Days, sport, a part-time job, family commitments.
2. Add sleep, using the times from Tool 1.
3. Whatever is left is real free time. Look for the pressure points.

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Early morning							
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							
Sleep (from – to)							

Weekly Totals

Activity	Hours this week
Work	
Travel	
NICS Training Days and bookwork	
Sleep	
Free time	

Talk about it: Where is the pressure point this week? Is there one thing that could move or be dropped?

Tool 3: Night-Before Checklist

Getting ready the night before takes the rush out of early mornings. Stick this on the fridge or by the front door.

- ☐ Lunch and snacks packed
- ☐ Water bottle filled and in the fridge
- ☐ Work clothes and boots ready
- ☐ PPE and tools packed (hi-vis, glasses, gloves, ear protection)
- ☐ Phone on charge
- ☐ Alarm set
- ☐ Lift, bus or train confirmed
- ☐ Books or logbook packed for NICS Training Days (if needed)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Tool 4: Wind-Down Routine

A 30 to 45 minute routine before bed helps the body get ready for sleep, which matters most before an early start.

Good Habits to Try

- Put screens away, or switch them to night mode, before lights out.
- Avoid energy drinks, coffee and cola after lunch. Energy drinks are common on worksites and can lead to a cycle of poor sleep and more caffeine the next day.
- Have a shower, eat a proper dinner, and keep the evening low-key.
- Keep the bedroom dark, cool and quiet.

My Wind-Down Plan

Time	What I'll do
	Lights out

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 5: Traffic-Light Energy Check-In

The traffic light gives you and your apprentice a quick, shared way to talk about tiredness. “I’m amber this week” is much easier for a teenager to say than “I’m not coping.”

Light	What it looks like	What to do
Green	Feeling OK, sleeping enough, managing work and NICS Training Days	Keep the routine going
Amber	Tired most days, hard to concentrate, short-tempered, relying on energy drinks	Look at the week planner, cut something back, prioritise sleep
Red	Exhausted, nodding off, making mistakes at work, feeling low or anxious	No driving. Talk to someone today. Consider a GP visit (see Tool 10)

Weekly Tracker

Your apprentice picks a colour each day. Look at the pattern together at the end of the week.

Week starting	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Two or more amber weeks in a row, or any red day, is a good reason to sit down and talk.

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 6: Weekend Recovery Guide

Weekend rest helps, but sleeping until midday resets the body clock and makes Monday morning much harder.

- **Sleep in, but not too far.** Aim to wake no more than about two hours later than a workday.
- **Nap short and early.** A 20 to 30 minute nap in the early afternoon helps. Long or late naps make it harder to sleep that night.
- **Get daylight in the morning.** Time outside early in the day helps reset the body clock.
- **Plan real rest.** Keep at least one block of the weekend free from chores, shifts and plans.
- **Sunday night matters.** Aim for a normal workday bedtime on Sunday.

Our Weekend Plan

	Saturday	**Sunday**
Wake up by		
Rest time		
Plans and commitments		
Bedtime		

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 7: Safe Travel Plan

Driving tired after a physical day is a real risk, especially for learner and provisional drivers. Agree on a plan before it's needed.

Our Agreement

- On a red day, my apprentice will not drive. They can call for a lift, with no questions asked.
- If they feel drowsy while driving, they will pull over somewhere safe and call.

How We Get To and From Work

Option	Details (who, contact number, times)
Usual way	
Backup lift 1	
Backup lift 2	
Public transport option	
Workmate carpool	

Signed (apprentice): _____ Date: _____

Signed (parent or carer): _____ Date: _____

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 8: NICS Training Days and Bookwork Planner

Short, regular blocks of bookwork beat a late-night rush before a deadline. Twenty minutes on two set evenings a week is often enough to stay on top of it.

How parents and carers can help: set aside a quiet time and space, and ask how it's going. You don't need to check the content.

Upcoming Due Dates

Task or assessment	Due date	Done

Regular Bookwork Times

Day	Time	How long

Tool 9: Conversation Starters

Car trips, meals and side-by-side jobs are often easier moments to talk than a formal sit-down. Keep questions open and listen more than you advise.

- "What's the hardest part of the day for you at the moment?"
- "On a scale of one to ten, how tired have you been this week?"
- "What colour would you give this week, green, amber or red?"
- "Is there anything about the hours or travel we could sort out together?"
- "What would make mornings easier?"
- "How are you getting on with the people at work?"
- "Is there anything at work you're not sure is OK?"

If they open up: thank them for telling you, stay calm, and ask what would help before jumping in with solutions.

National Institute of Construction Skills

Tool 10: When to Get Help

Tiredness isn't always just settling in. Use these tables to find the right support.

In an emergency, call 000

NICS apprentices have free access to the support of an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker. They can help support wellbeing and tackle obstacles that might get in the way of work and training. We can support apprentices not only with things related to training and work, but also other areas like relationship stressors, money matters, concerns with mood, or if they're just wanting to check in and talk with someone.

You or you apprentice can ask their trainer to speak with the mental health social worker, or if they'd feel more comfortable to contact them directly email support@nics.com.au. The response is usually within a few days.

If you or your apprentice need to speak with someone sooner there are other supports available:

National Services (All States)

If you notice...	Contact
Fatigue that continues despite good sleep	Your GP. Ongoing tiredness can be linked to low iron, illness or low mood.
Very long hours, missed breaks or pay concerns	The apprentice's Apprenticeship Support Network provider, or the Fair Work Ombudsman – 13 13 94 – fairwork.gov.au
Stress, anxiety or feeling down	Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 (ages 5–25, 24/7) – kidshelpline.com.au headspace (ages 12–25) – headspace.org.au
Your apprentice is in crisis	Lifeline – 13 11 14 (24/7) – lifeline.org.au

State Services

If you notice...	Queensland	South Australia
Fatigue causing safety risks at work	WorkSafe Queensland – 1300 362 128 – worksafe.qld.gov.au	SafeWork SA – 1300 365 255 – safework.sa.gov.au
Problems with the training contract or employer	Apprenticeships Info – 1800 210 210	Traineeship and Apprenticeship Services, Skills SA – 1800 673 097 – skills.sa.gov.au
Complaints about training	Queensland Training Ombudsman – trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au	Office of the Training Advocate – trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au
You want parenting advice or support	Parentline Queensland and NT – 1300 30 1300 – parentline.com.au	Parent Helpline – 1300 364 100 Parenting SA guides – parenting.sa.gov.au

Young people can contact services like Kids Helpline and headspace confidentially. You can encourage and support your apprentice to make contact themselves.

National Institute of Construction Skills

Document Version Control

Department / Organisation Title	National Institute of Construction Skills
Document Name	NICS_06_016 Supporting your apprentice_ Fatigue and Time management Parent Pack V1
Version No.	One (1)
Effective Date	27/10/2026

Relevant Qualification (If applicable)
Not applicable – resource for parents and carers of apprentices under 18

Authorship and Approval

Name	Position	Role	Action Date
Lauree Skene	RTO Compliance Coordinator	Co Author	27/10/2026
Dayna Price	Accredited Mental Health Social Worker	Co Author	27/10/2026

Version History

Version No.	Action Date / Person	Summary of Revisions
One (1)	27/10/2026 L. Skene D. Price	• Original version. Fatigue and time management parent pack created for parents and carers of apprentices under 18, including resource links for National, QLD and SA resources.

Distribution List

Position	Name	Notes / Area
President	Chris Munday	All relevant Trainers & Assessors and student support staff. This document is intended for distribution to parents and carers of apprentices under 18.
General Manager (GM)	Todd Aitken	
RTO Compliance Coordinator	Lauree Skene	
Head Trainer	Ruby Harrison	
Administration Coordinator / Student support	Paige Reynolds	