Bedtime Routine

A bedtime routine has many advantages: it can aid falling asleep faster, and improve the quality of sleep. Most importantly, it will help your child get into a pattern where they naturally start to feel tired. They may also learn to predict what is due to happen next.

When putting a bedtime routine together, think about your daily routine and the time you get home and have dinner. What time does your child need to be up for in the morning? And how much sleep do they need each night?

You may also want to think about what you want in your bedtime routine. A bedtime routine should be the same thing every day at the same time each evening one hour before bed. If your child doesn't not have a bath every night, then this can not be done within an hour of their bedtime on the nights they do have a bath.

If you give your child a bath when they get in from school, it's important that they get dressed into clothes afterwards, as it is still daytime. Getting into pyjamas represents that the day is ending and bedtime is near; this should be done within an hour of their bedtime.

A bedtime routine should be 60 minutes long and does not include screen time.

Please see an example of a bedtime routine below to include bath time:

07:30pm: Activity.

Set up a hand/eye activity to do, such as Lego, drawing, reading, play doh or puzzles, ideally in their bedroom.

As your child become older and move into their teens, they may wish to do a bit of yoga, meditation, listen to a pod cast or do calm colouring in.

You may wish to give a pre bedtime snack could during this time, a snack such as a low-sugar yoghurt, non-sugar-coated cereal, banana, turkey sandwich etc.

7:50pm: Bath time:

Have a calm bath or shower, the heat can help the body warm up, then drop in temperature, getting the body sleep ready. (Research shows that its best to get a child to sleep within 30 minutes of the bath, as the drop in temperature gets their body sleep ready.)

If you would rather not give your child a bath/shower each night, we would suggest extending the activity to 30 minutes and then spend 15 minutes getting them ready for bed.

8:05pm: Out of bath and pyjamas:

Your child is to get out the bath/shower, put their Pyjamas on, brush teeth and go to the toilet if they need to.

8:15pm: Story:

Your child can get into bed have a have a story read to them, or they can sit there and look through books if they prefer. They may wish to continue their podcast.

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8:30pm: Into bed

When it's time for bed, lay your child down. You can give them a kiss and a cuddle and choose one phrase to say, for example: "It's bedtime now, love you, see you in the morning". Try to avoid saying anything else. This helps to keep things consistent and to avoid conversations or arguments with them.

Visual aid, picture cards and routine board can help support the bedtime routine. By using visual aids, you are setting up what is expected from the child. You may wish to use a sand timer so the child can see how long they have left before moving onto the next part of the routine.