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## Bedtime Tips

Many parents have problems getting their children to bed. You may hear your child say, "I need to go to the toilet", "I need a drink", "I just need to tell you something", etc. This can often significantly delay sleep-time.

It is important to consider the following points if your child has been through trauma:



- ♥ Your child's sense of safety has been severely compromised. Their fear of the dark, monsters, and other scary things when they are alone in their room may be intensified for a period of time. It can help to create a safety ritual with your child before they go to bed, to help them feel secure when they enter their bedroom. For example, you could help your child make a picture of a magic protector/guardian to stick up on their wall to keep them safe while they sleep. A night light or cuddly toy may also help.
- ♥ Your child might be having nightmares or night terrors. Again, it can help to create safety rituals around this issue. For example, you could hang a "bad-dream catcher" above their bed, or create a nightmare song/dance/poem that keeps the nightmares away. A picture of a guardian/safe picture to keep nightmares away can also be hung on their wall.
- ♥ Your child may need extra reassurance before they go to sleep, such as extra hugs, or 5 minute story-time, or just a conversation about how their day has been when you tuck them in. It may help to let them know that you will be checking in on them every five or ten minutes to make sure they are okay.
- ♥ It is helpful to give your child lots of warning before bedtime (45 minutes to an hour) so they have time to finish playing, reading, homework, etc. and to brush their teeth and get ready for bed. Set a regular and consistent bedtime.