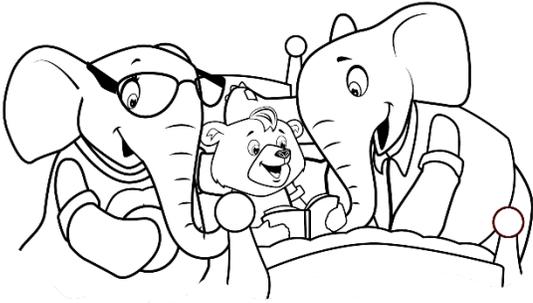


BEDTIME for BRAVE CUBS (and tired big critters)



Like most parents and caregivers, you're probably exhausted when 8pm rolls around. If you can find a little more energy deep inside, this can be a precious time for some little rituals that build up "felt safety" and repair some of the harm caused by early trauma.

Set yourself up for success

- ⇒ Choose a consistent time so that everyone in the family can get enough sleep
- ⇒ Start to lower the lights and turn off electronics at least 1 hour earlier

Create a routine with your cub - include a few of these tools for connection

- ⇒ **HEALTHY TOUCH:** Hugs and snuggles are great if your daughter can handle it. If not, consider trying lotion on her hands, arms or feet. Find a pressure that works for her - often firm but gentle is soothing. If she needs some extra intensity to settle, you might try playful "squeezes" down her arms, back or legs.
- ⇒ **STORY:** Tell your kiddo "the story of your day" – use a story-telling voice and include good parts and tough parts. This helps put events in the context of time and realize that feelings have a beginning, middle and end. Use stuffed animals or silly voices to make it more fun!
- ⇒ **SONG:** The opportunities are endless – and don't be shy about your singing voice!! Sing songs from school or church. Rock together as you sing or add in some playful physical contact. Make up your own lullaby to the tune of something familiar, like "Twinkle, twinkle little star. What a precious boy you are. Hair so red, smile so bright. How I love to squeeze you tight..."
- ⇒ **BREATH:** Take 2 minutes to use the breath to calm the body. Consider "Power up to Calm Down," free apps like SmilingMind and Stop, Breathe & Think or YouTube videos like Zen Den.
- ⇒ **SAFETY:** Leave a simple little post-it note each night (Love you, son. Your smile brightens my day. Hope you have a great Friday!). Even if your child can't read yet, you can use stickers or draw hearts. If your child has difficulty sleeping through the night or wants you to check on her, get a wall calendar and put a little sticker on it each night as you check on her. Leave your shirt or pillow case if you have to be away at bedtime. End the evening with the same phrase each night (Love you big as the sky. You're my sweetie boy forever. See you in the morning, baby girl.)