



Chris is finding it difficult to go to sleep and when he wakes in the night, to go back to sleep. He worries about school, about not getting enough sleep when he can't get back to sleep.

His parents talked with him and developed a small steps plan to help him manage his anxiety feelings and sleep better.

They reassure him they have confidence in his ability to quieten down his worries and fall asleep and that they will help and support him.

Small Steps for Chris

1. Chris and his parents talked about bedtime habits and sleep hygiene and expectations about sticking to the plan.
2. They planned a consistent evening and bedtime routine including no screens for 90 minutes before bed.
3. His parents helped Chris learn some sleep techniques- a breathing and a visualisation strategy, the "word shuffling" game. They practiced these during the day, each day and wrote instructions for each on post it notes. They included a time to write/draw worries and put them in a box.
4. Chris pinned the plan and the post it notes on his wall and ticked off the plan- boardgame, room tidy up, shower, book, breathing etc. They said goodnight and left him in his room awake.
5. His parents were calm and spoke softly in a monotone if interrupted in the night and guided Chris back to bed. His plan included putting his low lamp on and reading for 10 minutes if he's still awake after using the sleep techniques.
6. His parents praise efforts- going to bed, staying in bed. They had an incentive for 3 nights then 5 nights in a row.
7. They continued to use the small steps plan to establish a pattern.

Children can learn self soothing techniques and strategies to help them go back to sleep in their own bed and quieten worry thoughts.

Belly Breathing-child place hands lightly on their stomach and breathes slowly. They breathe slowly through the nose as if their belly was a balloon and out their mouth to let the air out of the balloon.

Hot chocolate- child imagines holding a mug of hot chocolate. Breathe in to smell the chocolate, breathe out to cool the hot chocolate down.

Word shuffling-choose a word (eg song).

Start with the first letter (s) think of all the things you can starting with **s**. Move to the next letter and so on.

Imagine the scene- Use a book that has holiday or peaceful and beautiful scenes. Ask your child to close their eyes and see the picture in their mind. They can do this to help them fall asleep, moving from image to image.

Silly Story-add phrases and build a story- *a blue bird picked up a coin, flew to the top of the tree. The bird bought a guitar with the coin. A passing giraffe grabbed the guitar and started to sing....*