



CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT SLEEP

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What are connections and how can they help?

- Connections are completed with the grown up and child, before bedtime, which can help the child to **settle and calm**.
- This builds **attunement and security**. It can also decrease feelings of stress and anxiety, making falling asleep a bit easier.
- Activities might include story massage, partner breathing or partner co-operation activities.

Story Massage

Story massage uses gentle massage strokes on the back when telling the child a story.

Benefits: encourages relaxation, positive touch, helps to regulate emotions

How to do it:

- 1) Choose a story you would like to read together, use a massage story or make up your own! Your child might sit in front of you or lie down, however they are comfortable, with their clothes on.
- 2) Ask for permission to massage before starting the story.
- 3) Read the story and add movements on the back, shoulders, arms and head. Ask the child to notice what movements they like the best.
- 4) Once the story is finished, thank your child for letting you massage them.



For more information about
Story Massage, visit
www.storymassage.co.uk

Partner breathing

This is when you work in pairs to do breathing activities together and usually involves some body contact. There are many different partner breathing activities.

Benefits: helps with connections and positive touch, gives child physical support with breathing activities

How to do it: Back to Back breathing example

- 1) Sit back to back in a comfortable position. You might link arms or place hands by each other.
- 2) Take a few relaxed breaths in, noticing your partner's breath if you can. Are you able to get your breaths in sync? How does it feel, breathing together?



Co-operation Games

This is when you work together for a shared outcome. The games usually involve trust and non-verbal communication.

Benefits: increase trust and body awareness, positive relationships

How to do it: Mirror Game example



1) Stand or sit comfortably facing your partner. Choose one of you to be the leader. The leader moves their arms, legs, body or head (staying on the spot they are in), with their partner copying / mirroring their movements. Try to make the movements slow and without talking (as the focus is on non-verbal communication).

2) Swap over, with the other person leading. Does it make a difference if we move fast or slow? What difference does it make if we try to maintain eye contact? Is it easier to follow particular parts of the body?

Mindful Colouring

Mindful colouring is something that can be completed individually or together, using felts or coloured pencils to colour an image. You might choose a mindful colouring book, or decide to print some from online.

Benefits: increase connections through shared activity, focus on one thing helps to relax and calm the mind

How to do it:

- 1) Choose your page to colour, using felts, pencils or other arts materials, letting your child take the lead and direction.
- 2) Notice if you use this time to sit quietly together (this can help with concentration) or whether your child wants to lead a conversation (with them choosing the topic).

Partner Poses

Partner poses are when you and your child work together to support each other in different positions.

Benefits: Builds trust and body awareness, increases connections, calming to body and mind

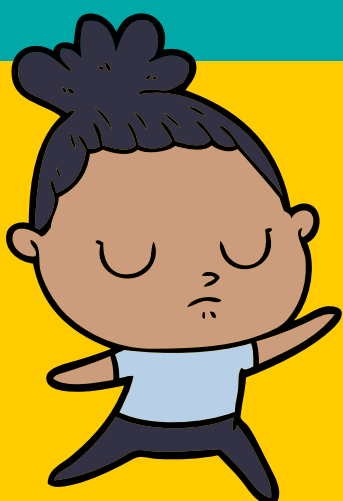
How to do it: Legs Up the Wall example

- 1) Sit with your child, both facing a wall or bed. You might be about arm width away from each other.
- 2) Both begin to lie back, knees bent and feet on the floor. As you breathe in, lift your legs against the wall. Your bottom doesn't need to be on the wall - rest your legs so that they are comfortable.
- 3) You might hold hands or look to your child. Maybe you might talk about things that you were grateful for today. Take a few moments to rest here.
- 4) To come out of this pose, gently roll to the side and push yourself up.



A final note...

These are just ideas...maybe you can think of creating your own games together to feel connected.



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www.edpsyched.co.uk/parent-hub