

Five Magic Kisses

Key ways to help your child have a good night's sleep

Some children are anxious about being alone in their room and repeatedly get out of bed to reassure themselves that their loved ones are still nearby. This technique, often called Five Magic Kisses, provides a child with reassurance. It can give a child a sense of safety and security and help them to relax in bed on their own, increasing the chance that they may be able to settle to sleep.



- Explain to your child that there are five kisses especially for them. You will give them the magic kisses through the night and the fifth is a magic kiss which lasts all night long. They are to stay in bed and you will return after settling them to give them the next kiss.
- At the end of a calming bedtime routine, tuck the child in and give them kiss number one. Say you will return in a few minutes, and leave the room.
- After the agreed time, return and give kiss number two. Say you will return for kiss number three. This will be after a slightly longer interval than the time between kisses one and two. Choose an interval you think the child will be able to manage. Leave the room.
- After the agreed time, return and give kiss number three. Again increase the interval between kisses by an amount you think the child can manage.
- Repeat for kiss number four.
- When you return for kiss number five, leave a token which represents the fifth magic kiss, which lasts all night. This way, if the child is asleep when you bring the magic kiss, they will know that you kept your word and came to kiss them.
- If the child gets out of bed and comes to find you, return them to their room. Remind them briefly that they don't need to do that as you will come and kiss them. Be a 'Boring Parent' and leave the room, returning at the agreed time to give the next kiss. It is important that you remain calm and loving.
- At first you may need the five kisses to be quite close together so that the child is able to stay in bed long enough to learn that you really will keep your word and come back. As their confidence grows you will be able to increase the interval between kisses bit by bit.

Consistency is key.

Keeping to the same pattern, even using familiar words, can help children to feel safe and secure so they can fall asleep more easily.

What to use as the fifth kiss?

Some people use a drawing on a sticky note, a lipstick kiss on a tissue, a sticker, a knitted heart or a tiny, safe, soft toy.