



Five Magic Kisses

Some children are anxious about being alone in their room and repeatedly get out of bed to reassure themselves that mum or dad is still around. This technique takes the responsibility for providing that reassurance away from the child and gives it to the parent, allowing the child to relax in bed and increasing the chance of settling within a reasonable time.

1. Explain to the child that there are 5 kisses for him or her to have before they go to sleep and that the fifth is a magic kiss which lasts all night. They are to stay in bed and you will return to kiss them.
2. 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, perhaps that you will tidy up the bathroom, and leave the room.
3. 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. Perhaps this time you will go downstairs and do the washing up. Leave the room.
4. 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.
5. Repeat for kiss number four.
6. When you return for kiss number five, leave something which represents the fifth, magic kiss which lasts all night. Some people use a lipstick kiss on a tissue, you might choose little knitted heart or a tiny, safe, soft toy. 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. You can read 'The Kissing Hand for Chester Raccoon' to reinforce the idea.

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. 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.