

## INTRODUCTION

October marks the start of fall, and with it shorter days and longer nights. Fall is a great time to sit around a campfire to roast some hot dogs, toast marshmallows, and tell ghost stories. While everyone can enjoy a good s'more, ghost stories can be very scary to little ones and keep them up at night. This issue of Oregon Parenting Together will focus on making sleeping time feel safe for children of all ages



## NO MORE MONSTERS UNDER THE BED!

A good night's sleep is very important for kids. Research shows that getting too little sleep is linked to kids having a harder time in school, such as paying attention and using their motor skills. Getting enough sleep can be hard for your child if bad dreams are keeping them awake. While nightmares are very common, they are also stressful for both children and parents. It is important that you work with your children to come up with strategies to help deal with their bad dreams. Studies show that active strategies, like looking under the bed to check for monsters, work better than avoidance strategies, like telling your child to close their eyes. So be a super-hero to your children, and help them find ways to deal with their nighttime fears! Also, don't be afraid to talk to your children's doctor if the nightmares are not going away or getting worse.

This series of newsletters is inspired and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments or ideas for future newsletters please share on our Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) or Twitter page (@OPECParentingEd).

## Sleepy Kids & sweet dreams

Tips to help get your kids to bed



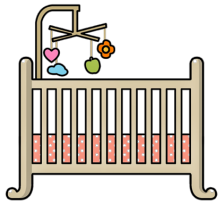
- ◆ Have fun and be happy before bed! No scary stories or movies.
- ◆ Make the dark fun, not scary! Play games in the dark, like flashlight tag.
- ◆ If your child has a nightmare, comfort and cuddle with them for a little while. Reassure them that they are safe in their own bed.
- ◆ Talk about nightmares during the day time, try to figure out if there is something in common with other nightmares they have had in the past.
- ◆ Work with your child to come up with ways to deal with nightmares. Teach them how you like to deal with scary thoughts.



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## IT'S TIME FOR BABY TO GO "BACK TO BED"



If you are a parent of an infant you are trying to take the best care possible of the new addition to your family. You are given advice from your doctor, your family, your friends, and even strangers on the street. It can be hard to figure out what is the right thing to do, especially when it comes to how your baby sleeps. Recommendations for the position your baby should sleep in has greatly changed over the years. From the 1950s through the early 1990s it was recommended that babies should sleep on their stomachs. However, studies actually showed this is one of the most dangerous positions a baby could sleep in and leads to a greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Starting in 1994 the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has led the "Back to Sleep" campaign to tell parents that the safest position for babies to sleep in is on their backs. It is also recommended that all soft items, like blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals be removed from where your infant is sleeping. While they can be comforting to your child, they can also cover their nose and mouth making it hard for them to breathe. Because these recommendations have changed over the years, it is important that you share the information with anyone who watches your baby. It is especially important to talk with grandparents, since they might not be aware of the changes since they were raising babies. **Spread the word, it's time for babies to go "back-to-bed!"**

### Infant Sleeping Tips

- **Infants should sleep laying on their backs**
- **Use a firm sleeping surface (mattress)**
- **Soft items like pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals should be kept OUT of a crib, bassinet or cradle**
- **Try to keep your baby cool, and don't let them get too warm**
- **Share these tips with other caregivers!**

### FUN WITH YOUR KIDS Read A Bedtime Story!

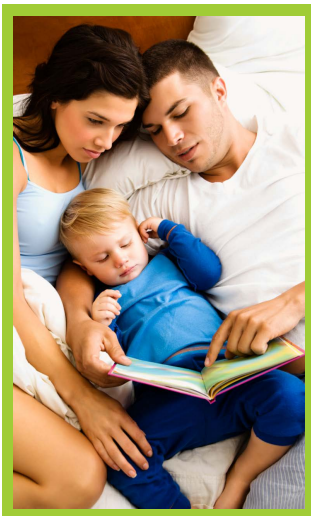
No matter the age of your child, hearing the soothing sound of your voice and a slow rhythm of a story is a great way make bedtimes enjoyable!

Find your local parenting resources at:  
<http://orparenting.org/>

THE COLLINS FOUNDATION  
THE FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION  
MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST  
THE OREGON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

#### REFERENCES

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