TUCK-IN TALKS

LIFE SKILL
communicating with others

Why create a family ritual?
Bedtime is an ideal time for parents or guardians and young children to share some quiet moments together. It's a good time to talk about what happened during the day and resolve any problems that might have developed. With this simple ritual, quiet communication between adults and young children becomes part of the family schedule.

What do we need?
soft background music (optional)

How long will it take?
as long as you want

What do we do?
When it's bedtime, tell your child that before you kiss her goodnight, you are going to have a tuck-in talk. Explain that she has to be in bed—with pajamas on and teeth brushed—before the tuck-in talk can start. (It's also a good idea to take care of last-minute drinks of water and trips to the bathroom.) Make sure your child understands that you will use your quiet voices for tuck-in talks and that these talks are more fun if the lights are out (unless the child is afraid of the dark). When your child is ready, turn off the light, sit down on the bed, and spend at least five minutes listening to your child's answers to questions like these.

Sample Questions:
• What was the best (or funniest, naughtiest, or scariest) thing that happened today?
• If you were the mommy or daddy in this house, what would you do if the children wouldn't eat their suppers, pick up their toys, etc.?
• What would you like to do tomorrow?
• What do you think it's like to be a big person?

Make up your own questions to encourage your child to share what's going on in her world. And be ready to answer a few questions from your child. End the conversation with a kiss and a hug. After you've had tuck-in talks for a few weeks, sit down and discuss the way you feel about them.
What happened?

▼ How did it feel to be tucked into bed?
▼ How did it feel to tuck your child into bed?

What did you learn?

▼ What did you learn when you talked to each other?
▼ What did you learn about nonverbal communication?

Why was this activity important?

▼ What good things happen during tuck-in talks?

What's next?

▼ Do tuck-in talks at night make talking easier during the day?
▼ Do you want to have tuck-in talks with your children when you become a parent?