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A Calm and Healthy Evening Guide

Creating Calm Evenings and Peaceful Nights

Discover simple bedtime routines that help children transition from daily activities to restful sleep through calming habits, comforting environments, and consistent evening practices.

Presentation Overview



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Meet Your Facilitator

Amanda Drayton
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Metta Services

Role or connection to elementary school children

One thing I hope you take away today



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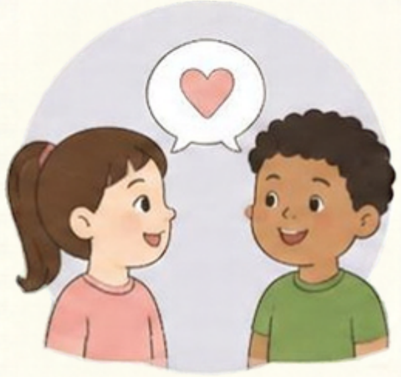
Group Norms



Listen with curiosity



One person speaks at a time



Share ideas and experiences respectfully



Ask questions and assume positive intent



Keep personal examples private

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Participant Introductions

Let's take a few minutes to get to know each other!

- Your name
- How many children are you caring for or supporting?
- What are their ages or grade levels?
- One thing you hope to take away today



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What are you bringing with you today?





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Today's Road Map

1



Bedtimes

2



Morning routines

3



Daily transitions

4



Practical tools to try

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Why Routines Matter



Wellbeing

Predictable routines that help children feel secure and supported.



Readiness to learn

Calmer transitions that help children arrive prepared to participate.



Growing independence

Repeated steps that help children know what to expect and take ownership over time.



Where do routines already support the children in your care?

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Bedtime Routines That Help Children Wind Down

What helps

- Consistent timing
- A predictable sequence
- Calming connection

What can get in the way

- Busy evenings
- Transitions
- Resistance

Try this

- One small change families can practice this week



Creating quiet time one hour before bed

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Morning Routines That Set Children Up for the Day



1. Start with connection
2. Make the next step visible
3. Build in breathing room

What already works?

Where do mornings tend to get stuck?

Make lunch and pick clothing the night before

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Transitions and Common Challenges

CHALLENGE	SUPPORT
Bedtime resistance	Offer two calm choices
Rushed mornings	Use a simple morning checklist
Changing schedules	Keep a few anchor steps consistent
Big feelings	Pause, connect, then redirect



Offer two calm choices: red or blue pajamas; one story or two

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Build a Routine That Works

What would make this routine easier for this child and this family?

1

Choose one transition



2

Name the steps



3

Add a support



4

Plan for flexibility



Example: 7:30 wind-down → pajamas → story with parent → adjust as needed

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More Ways to Connect





Breathing together

Try three slow breaths before the next step: smell the flower, blow the candle.



Visual routines

Use simple pictures or checkboxes for the sequence: bathroom, pajamas, story, sleep.



Lower stimulation

Dim the lights, reduce noise, and offer one calm activity before bed.



Check in with the child

Ask: What feels easy?
What feels hard?
What would help?

Connect first, then guide the next step.

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Parent Resources for the Future



1



AAP HealthyChildren.org

“Brush, Book, Bed: How to Structure Your Child’s Nighttime Routine”

healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Brush-Book-Bed.aspx

A simple, predictable bedtime sequence.

2

CDC

“Tips for Relying on Routines and Rules”

cdc.gov/parenting-toddlers/structure-rules/index.html

Practical morning and bedtime routine ideas.

3



Child Mind Institute

“How to Help Kids with Transitions”

childmind.org/article/how-can-we-help-kids-with-transitions/

Previews, countdowns, music, and visual cues.

4



ZERO TO THREE

“Creating Routines for Love and Learning”

zerotothree.org resource/creating-routines-for-love-and-learning/

Predictable routines that build security and ease transitions.

5



ZERO TO THREE

"Your Calm Is Their Calm: Co-Regulation Strategies for Infants and Toddlers"

zerotothree.org resource/your-calm-is-their-calm-co-regulation-strategies-for-infants-and-toddlers/

Calm voice, proximity, feeling words, and shared regulation.

6



Harvard Center on the Developing Child

Serve and Return"

developingchild.harvard.edu resource-guides/guide-serve-and return/

Responsive back-and-forth interactions that support development.



Save these links for ideas you can return to and share with families.

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Group Feedback and Discussion

- What idea feels most useful?
- What questions or concerns are coming up?
- What would you adapt for your setting?



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More Support for SAE Families



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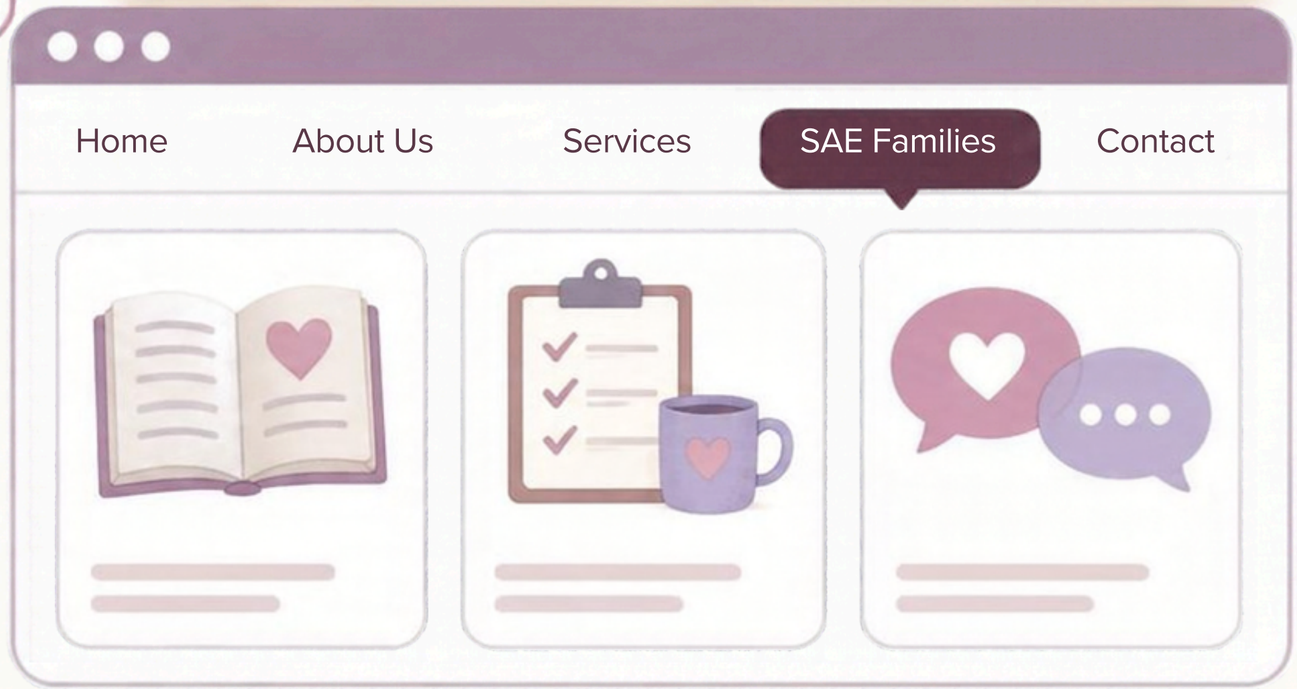
The SAE Families tab offers helpful topics and resources. Each workshop presentation will also be uploaded to our website.



- Explore helpful family information
- Find topics to support everyday routines and connection
- Return to trusted resources when new questions come up

Visit mettaservices.org and select the SAE Families tab.