Visualization can help children sleep, improve their health and attain their goals.

Most people have used creative visualization their entire lives, long before they knew there was a name for it. Children have vivid imaginations and creative visualization usually comes quite naturally to them. However, because we have so many ready-made images from such sources as TV, computers, video games, etc., it is more important than ever to encourage and provide opportunities for our children to use their imaginations.

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When using creative visualization with your children, start by providing the structure—taking your son or daughter on an imaginary journey. I think of it as interactive storytelling, your child experiences the story as if he or she is truly living it. Later, your children will come up with their own ideas and pictures, seeing or imagining them in their “dream minds.” Visualization skills are enhanced through practice, and before you know it, your child will be effortlessly visualizing scenarios of his own choosing as he drifts off to sleep.

Some people think that visualization is ineffective for them if they don’t actually ‘see’ images in their minds. Most children are able to actually see images; however, even if they don’t, the process is still useful. If children (or adults) can remember events that have already happened, then they have the ability to visualize, creating something in their imaginations that is not happening in the here and now. It’s conjuring for the sheer purpose of making you feel good.

I call the blurred time between awake and asleep, “twilight time,” a perfect time to use creative visualization. We give our sons and daughters a precious gift when we teach them to treasure this magical time. During “twilight time,” the conscious mind is relaxed enough to be carried away with a freedom not typically experienced in a totally awakened state. At this point children have actually entered a meditative state; their brain waves are operating at a slow enough rate (often called the theta state) to facilitate creative visualization and sleep. As a child, long before I’d heard of the term “visualization,” I would move seamlessly from my nightly visualization into a dream; in effect choosing the opening scene of the evening’s first dream.

When you dream, you are free…to be the things you want to be. When you dream, you are free…to see the things you want to see. Sometimes in my dreams I fly, through the starry, starry sky. When I see the moon I laugh, it's a great big bed for the tall giraffe.

As children thoroughly relax and the line between asleep and awake fades, their visualizations may gradually transform into dreams. This is also a time when positive affirmations and thoughts can be extremely powerful as they enter a child’s subconscious mind more easily. It is very effective to intersperse positive thoughts and affirmations throughout a visualization. Be sure to focus the attention of these statements and affirmations on what you want for your child, rather than what you don’t want. For instance, if your child has been sick, naturally you hope he (or she) gets well. It’s important that the statements and affirmations that you choose focus on wellness, rather than on not wanting to be sick. This may seem inconsequential; however, by focusing on what is not wanted, rather than what is wanted, you may inadvertently be inviting it
We help our children to create their own experiences by encouraging them to visualize or imagine themselves obtaining their heart's desire. By imagining that they already have what they desire, children will allow it and welcome it into their reality. Pure desire is a wonderful thing: it is a feeling of expectation and anticipation. Parents sometimes ask me if visualizing the attainment of goals teaches children to expect them without putting forth the necessary effort. In fact, the opposite is true. By focusing on what they want, children will be drawn to the opportunities and experiences that will bring them closer to their goals. People often confuse desire with yearning, which focuses on not having what we desire. One of the easiest ways to differentiate yearning from desire is to pay attention to how it feels. Desire brings forth joy, eagerness, and expectation while yearning is likely to be associated with feelings of discouragement and pessimism.

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