Here are a few tips and ideas to support you with your child and their sleep. I have also attached two documents – one is a Rainbow Story which is read to children each night before bed, the idea being if they wake up during the night parents can remind their child of the rainbow story (Imagery Meditation). The other document is a list of melatonin foods which are commonly known to regulate sleep by sending signals to the body that it is time to settle down thereby promotes sleep.

\*Maintain a good sleep hygiene – decide on the bedtime and stick to it.  Give a 5 minute warning – “it will be time to get ready for bed in 5 minutes” Read or tell a bedtime story (usually this is in the bedroom after brushing teeth). Let your child choose the story, maybe sing a calming song/lullaby afterwards. Tuck them in/cover them with duvet/blanket, say “good night” with a cuddle and a kiss and say “see you in the morning”. This will become a familiar routine and it helps your child to predict what comes next. For some children a visual timetable might help so they can add a tick or photo once the bedtime task is complete.

\*Limit any screens at least 1.5 hrs before going to bed, blue lights/screens stimulates their brains so they need time to relax from screen time. Maybe suggest your child does some colouring, listens to calming music or a puzzle to encourage your child to unwind after their dinner/bath. A warm bath may be helpful before bedtime but for some children bath time is extremely fun and can stimulate them so make sure your child has quiet/calm time after this.

\*Sleeping environment some environmental factors may contribute to sleep difficulties these include: - an uncomfortable bed, a high or low bedroom temperature, bright lighting in the bedroom and the landing or through the curtains or blinds, a stimulating bedroom for example bright and colourful wall coverings and bed linen, hanging mobiles and toys that are on display and that are accessible for play. Look at your child’s bedroom – Is there too much to look at? Can you see any objects which create shapes/shadows which could be scary to your child? Check the lighting and temperature.

\*For some children rewards work well. Maybe discussing your concerns with sleep with your child will help you to come up with a plan together. Children are more motivated and keen to work with you if they feel included.

\*Lavender is a relaxing scent, maybe add a few drops of lavender oil on to your child’s pillow. There are lavender bubble baths and body lotions which may also be useful.

\*If your child is frequently waking during the night take them back to bed and say “it’s time to go to sleep”  if they cry and fuss, stay calm and tell them you know they are upset, but they must settle down and go to sleep. Make sure they have their teddy or other comfort with them to cuddle. Say “you will see them in the morning” leave the room. If they get up again, still stay calm and firm and do it all again. For older children it is worth having a discussion with them during the daytime to explore what

is preventing them to go back to sleep on their own. Emphasise lots also during the daytime that you love your child and they are safe, explain you will be in your bedroom sleeping too so this reassures your child.

Once you have tried the sleep hygiene and behavioural strategies and you still have concerns it is a good idea to keep a sleep diary for at least two weeks to gain a general understanding of your child’s sleep pattern. Always seek medical advice if your child has significant sleep problems or if you have any concerns to help rule out medical conditions.