

BEDTIME TIPS



BEDTIME ROUTINES

CHILDREN WILL CO-OPERATE BETTER AT BEDTIME IF THEY HAVE A ROUTINE THAT THEY ARE USED TO. ROUTINES PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SLEEP TIME SO THEY KNOW IT IS COMING AND THIS HELPS THEM TO SETTLE EASIER AT NIGHT. YOUR ROUTINE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED, JUST A FEW SIMPLE STEPS IN THE SAME ORDER EVERY NIGHT BEFORE YOUR CHILD GOES TO BED.

Example of a good bedtime routine:

1. Quiet time ½ hour before bed (only quiet activities at this time)
2. Wash/bath and change into bedtime clothes
3. Brush teeth
4. Story or reading time (set a time limit)
5. Lights off and sleep time



Quiet time is very important as it gives your child time to relax and calm down before it is time to go to bed. Your child should have at least ½ between dinner and bedtime as food will give them energy so they will not want to sleep straight after a meal. If you stick to a routine your child will begin to recognise when bedtime is coming and so they will be prepared for it.





How to get them in their own bed and /or encourage them to stay in bed

Explain to your child that they need to sleep in their own bed and put them in there as soon as it's bed time. Your reaction is important! If your child gets back out of their bed or fights against it, it is important that you react as little as possible. Otherwise you will be rewarding them for negative behaviour.

Step 1

If your child gets out of bed, take them back IMMEDIATELY. Do not say anything to them apart from that it is bedtime and they need to sleep in their own bed. Be firm but do not shout. Your child may request drink, food, toilet etc but this should be firmly refused and you should repeat once more that it is bedtime.

Step 2

The next time your child gets out of bed repeat step 1, only tell them once it is bedtime. Requests should be refused. If another adult is at home, ask them if they can do this step. This will show you are working together.

Step 3

The next time your child gets up, ignore them. They will have heard you say its bedtime and do not need to be told again. Turn off the TV and stop your conversation. This shows your child they are not missing anything by going to bed, and then you must take them firmly back to bed. If they start shouting or trying to get your attention in other ways you need to take them firmly back to bed again.

Step 4

If your child still gets up you may need to try something new. If you want to stay in the room with them do not look at or speak to them as this will give them a reason to stay awake or start a game. Sometimes closing the door firmly will work, tell them they can have it open if they stay in bed but you will shut it if they get up. Or if you have patience, just repeat step 3.

Eventually your child will become bored and give in. However, through the first few weeks this may take a while. You will need to keep repeating the same process for a few nights until your child realises you will not accept getting out of bed. Once they see how determined you are it should begin to get easier and the process will become shorter.

It is important that you do not give in to your child as they will learn that the harder they push the more likely you are to give them what they want and so they will keep trying!
