

Parenting News

Ideas that work with kids!



BEDTIME STRATEGIES

FOR TODDLERS, PRESCHOOLERS & ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN

- Create a **bedtime routine** & stick to it. For example, bath time, brushing teeth, 2-3 stories or 5 minutes of “talking time” with mom or dad. Lights out at the same time, nightly.
- Be sure to have a period of **“winding down”** prior to bedtime. This is especially important for very active children.
- Give children **“transition time”** before the bedtime routine starts: “Robert, in 10 minutes it will be time to go upstairs for your bath.” “Kate, when this program is over, it is time for your shower.” Then, be sure to help your child end the activity he is doing & follow through with getting the bath/shower going.
- Set up your child’s bedroom to **maximize sleep**. If there are too many things for him to do, or the environment is overly stimulating, he might have a hard time settling down. Avoid putting a TV in your child’s room. When children learn to fall asleep with the TV on, they frequently have sleep issues as they develop.
- Once your child is in bed, help him stay there. If he keeps coming out to talk with you, **be boring**. Let him know that it is bedtime & that you will walk him back to bed.
- If your child keeps getting up, continue to **walk him back to bed**. Again, be BORING: “It is time for bed. Let me help you go back to your room.” Avoid lecturing, yelling, threatening, explaining since these give too much attention to your child’s undesirable behavior.
- In order to **minimize getting out of bed** to go to the bathroom or have a snack (“I’m HUNGRY!!”), be sure that you allow your child to have something to eat PRIOR to the bedtime routine: “The kitchen is closing. If you want something to eat, now is the time.” Additionally, be sure that he uses the toilet right before getting into bed. These are often excuses to delay going to sleep.
- For some children, bedtime is difficult because it means separating from mom & dad. Give lots of love & positive statements to your child to help **ease the stress** of separation.



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