

# Bedtime

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**SET** a regular, predictable bedtime routine. Children relax better when bedtimes are close to the same time each night or at naptime. Follow a routine the children can recognize of bathtime, stories, cudding and songs.

**L**

**LIMIT** television watching (or videos), rough housing or exciting play, scary exciting stories and running around. These things make it hard for a child to relax and calm down enough to go to sleep.

**E**

**EXPECT** times in your child's life that bedtime routines will NOT go smoothly. Such as an exciting day, holidays time, illnesses, vacations, changes in schedules, bad dreams, new baby in the house, change in parent's schedules, adult fighting, thunderstorms and rain.

**E**

**EVERY** child's sleep schedule and needs are different and can change over time. Learning to fall asleep, comforting one's self and separating from adults you love to go to sleep are at times hard lessons to learn. Some children need nightlights, blankets, stuffed animals, music or other comfort items to help them all asleep.

**P**

**PROBLEMS** such as nightmare, bedwetting, waking up, not wanting to sleep alone, and not falling asleep immediately are all common childhood problems. They can occur and reoccur at anytime.

**NIGHTMARES:** Common to most children at any age. Comfort the child and reassure calmly and quietly help them to go back to sleep. Telling some children it was "just a dream" helps some to calm down, but some children are not ready to understand the differences between scary things in dreams and scary things in their lives.

**BEDWETTING:** Even after a child has been potty trained, wetting the bed can occur. Limit liquid intake before bedtime, protect the bed and clothing and remind the child go to the bathroom before bed. Punishment and embarrassment do not correct this problem and can make it worse.

**WAKING UP:** Children can wake up at any time during the night for many reasons. Don't turn bright lights on, play with the child or encourage out of bed activities. Help the child to go back to sleep.

**NOT WANTING TO SLEEP ALONE:** Depending on your personality and family choices you can:

Allow children to sleep with the adults

Allow children to fall asleep with the adults and then move to another bed

Allow children to sleep with siblings

Allow children to sleep in same room as adults on blanket, sleeping bag or pallet

Stay with the child until they fall asleep in their bed

## **BOOKS FOR CHILDREN:**

- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown
- *The Berenstain Bears and the Bad Dream* by Stan and Jan Berentstein
- *Just go to Bed!* by Mercer Mayer
- *What a Bad Dream* by Mercer Mayer
- *Pajama Time* by Boynton