

Help With Getting Your Child to Sleep

Here are some basic suggestions from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#):

1. Make sure there is a quiet period before your child goes to bed. Establishing a pleasant routine that may include reading, singing, or a warm bath. A regular routine will help your child understand that it will soon be time to go to sleep. If parents work late hours, it may be tempting to play with their child before bedtime. However, active play just before bedtime may leave the child excited and unable to sleep. Limit television viewing and video game play before bed.

2. Try to set a consistent schedule for your child and make bedtime the same time every night. His sleep patterns will adjust accordingly.

3. Allow your child to take a favorite teddy bear, toy, or special blanket to bed each night. Such comforting objects often help children fall asleep—especially if they awaken during the middle of the night. Make sure the object is safe. A teddy bear may have a ribbon, button, or other part that may pose a choking hazard for your child. Look for sturdy construction at the seams. Stuffing or pellets inside the stuffed animal may also pose a danger of choking.

4. Make sure your child is comfortable. Check the temperature in your child's room. Clothes should not restrict movement. He may like to have a drink of water, have a night-light left on, or the door left slightly open. Try to handle your child's needs before bedtime so that he doesn't use them to avoid going to bed.

5. Try to avoid letting your child sleep with you. This will only make it harder for him to learn to settle himself and fall asleep when he is alone.

6. Try not to return to your child's room every time he complains or calls out. A child will quickly learn if you always give in to his requests at bedtime. When your child calls out, try the following:

- Wait several seconds before answering. Your response time can be longer each time to give your child the message that it is time for sleep. It also gives him the opportunity to fall asleep on his own.
- Reassure your child that you are there. If you need to go into his room, do not stimulate the child or stay too long.
- Move farther from your child's bed every time you reassure him, until you can do this verbally without entering his room.