

Bedtime



Young children are very active and require a long period of sleep each day to give their bodies time and energy to grow. Develop a **bedtime routine** so that your children will know what to expect and will feel more secure knowing what is going to happen.

Pointers for Parents

- ★ Limit active play to early evening hours. Encourage quiet play for 30 minutes to 1 hour before preparing for bed. At bedtime, avoid “wind-up” chatter/activities (e.g. “tickle fights”).
- ★ Be sure to signal that bedtime is coming before you actually begin getting ready.
- ★ Make bedtime the time your child’s body is in the bed, **not** the time you begin the routine of toothbrushing, changing into PJ’s, etc.
- ★ Be as calm as possible about the bedtime routine. Your tension will affect your children. Bedtime struggles cause children to dread bedtime.
- ★ Be pleasant and be firm.
- ★ Help as much as needed to keep your child moving (put the paste on the tooth brush or help with pajamas).
- ★ Ignore the overly tired child’s resistance, whining or crying. Comfort your child and say, “You played so hard today. You are tired tonight.” Summarize the good things about the day with your child.
- ★ Have their comfort objects (blanket, stuffed animal, pillow) ready. Your children may need a dim night light if they are afraid in the dark.
- ★ Encourage cooperation by reading 3 or 4 stories AFTER your child is in bed and before the lights are out.
- ★ Be firm about the body staying in the bed. For children who wander from their bed, put them right back into the bed. Be silent until they are back in bed.