



Bedtime Routine

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!

Establishing a Bedtime Routine

Please write down *times* and some bedtime *rituals* that you can try at home to establish a bedtime routine.

Bedtime Routine

| Routine Steps | Time | Bedtime Rituals |
|-----------------------------|------|-------------------------|
| To prepare for bed: | | |
| To spend some time bonding: | | |
| Lights Out! | | Good Night! Sleep Well! |



Bedtime Bonding

Bedtime Rituals offer an opportunity to bond with your child! By establishing a time and process for sleep, you can provide your child with a sense of security and love. This requires some effort, but it reduces bedtime struggles and aids your child in falling asleep faster and sleeping more soundly. In addition, using bedtime to bond helps your child's bedtime experiences to be relaxing, enjoyable, and nurturing.

Set the Stage for Sleep!

-  Establish a set time for bedtime (generally by 8 p.m.) and dedicate a set amount of time for your child's bedtime routine (generally between 20 minutes to 1 hour).
-  Offer your child a warning as the time to transition to bedtime activities approaches. You can add an element of fun by turning on soft music.
-  Be consistent! Families have many demands on their time. Make bedtime and bonding a priority as it can be a rewarding way to connect with your child at the end of the day.
-  Children find structure comforting; it reduces stress, and they come to know what you expect of them. Incorporate healthy habits, like brushing teeth, into the ritual. Other rituals, like taking a warm bath, can help to relax muscles and ready children for sleep.
-  Make certain your child has comfortable pajamas and a safe, comfortable, and dedicated place to sleep with limited sights, sounds, and distractions. Avoid having televisions, computers, or cell phones in your child's bedroom.
-  Bedtime is a time of separation for children, and some children may need items that provide a sense of comfort or security — like a night light, blanket, doll, stuffed animal, or an item that belongs to their parent/caregiver.



Enjoy Special Moments Together!

Once your child is in his or her pajamas and ready for bed, cherished moments and memories can be made! Below are some ideas for creating special bonding opportunities.



Start a conversation game! Bedtime is a great time to talk to your child without all the daily distractions. Identify a way that you can end each day with a short conversation—share the highs and lows of the day, ask about what your child wishes to dream about, or talk about what he or she is looking forward to tomorrow.

You can end the day with praise and encouragement! Find something your child did during the day that you are grateful for or proud of and tell him or her about it.

Reading books to your child is a good way to calm him or her, and also encourage reading skills, a love of learning, and imagination. You can also use the time to tell stories. For example, share stories of your own childhood or your relatives' experiences. This can help your child better understand and appreciate his or her heritage and your family's values.



Weave your values into the evening rituals. For example, some families choose to say a prayer or read religious texts together.



Relaxation strategies can be practiced — such as stretching, visualization, or meditation.

End the day by laughing and telling jokes to each other.

Singing a lullaby may be a soft and soothing addition to your nightly ritual.

Use bedtime as an opportunity to physically express love for your child. Cuddle while reading, hug your child, and kiss him or her goodnight.



Bedtime Books!

Below is a list of children's bedtime books that reinforce bedtime rituals, highlight the joys of sleep, and share silly nighttime antics.



A Book of Sleep by Il Sung Na



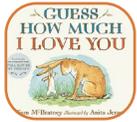
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown



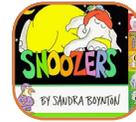
Pajama Time! by Sandra Boynton



Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson



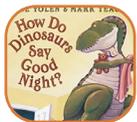
Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney



Snoozers: 7 Short Bedtime Stories for Lively Little Kids by Sandra Boynton



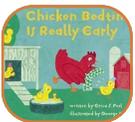
Bedtime for Francis by Russell Hoban



How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight? by Jane Yolen



Snug in Mama's Arms by Angela Shelf Medearis



Chicken Bedtime is Really Early by Erica S. Perl



I Need My Monster by Amanda Noll



The Going to Bed Book by Sandra Boynton



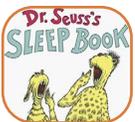
Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late! by Mo Willems



In the Night Kitchen by Maurice Sendak



The Goodnight Train by June Sobel



Dr. Seuss's Sleep Book by Dr. Seuss



I Love You, Stinky Face by Lisa McCourt



The Napping House by Audrey Wood



Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed by Eileen Christelow



It's Time to Sleep, My Love by Nancy Tillman



The Night Night Book by Marianne Richmond



Go Away, Big Green Monster! by Ed Emberley



It's Too Soon! by Nigel McMullen



The Seven Silly Eaters by Mary Ann Hoberman



Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site by Sherri Duskey Rinker



Kiss Good Night by Amy Hest



Time for Bed by Mem Fox



Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann



Llama Llama Red Pajama by Anna Dewdney



Tuck Me In! by Dean Hachen