



Troubleshooting Bedtime Challenges

Children require the appropriate amount of sleep regularly to promote optimal health. Experiencing adequate sleep has been shown to improve attention, behavior, learning, memory, emotional regulation, quality of life, and mental and physical health. Sometimes bedtime is a struggle even if routines are in place and followed. Remember to remain calm and be consistent! Here are some troubleshooting ideas for those tricky times when bedtime might be challenging.

The Slippery One

For the child who continues to get out of bed after the nightly routine...

Remain calm, do not engage in conversation, and take your child back to their bedroom and place them back into bed. This pattern may happen several times, but be consistent! It will pay off!



The Just One More

For the child who is suddenly thirsty, has to pee, or needs to tell you something...

Prior to the final step of putting your child in bed, offer them water, have them use the toilet, and ask them if they have anything they want to tell you before they go to sleep. Adding these steps into your routine may help eliminate the requests once they are already in bed.

The Overactive One

For the child who seems to get hyper right before bedtime...

Add time into the bedtime routine for your child to burn off some energy. For example, before bath time, give them 5 minutes of crazy time where they can run and be active. Then, when it is time for a bath and the remainder of the routine, make it clear that crazy time is over.





The Early Riser

For the child who is up much earlier than they should be...

Try using a clock (or other system) that shows your child when it is okay to wake up and get out of bed.

The Scary Dreamer

For the child who has nightmares or night terrors...

Nightmares and night terrors can be very common for a toddler. Sometimes, nightmares and night terrors can occur when a child is sick, overtired, anxious, has experience trauma, has irregular sleep routines and bedtimes, or is experiencing developmental milestones. Try to provide comfort (e.g., rocking your child) during these times, but make sure you don't put into place any strategies that you might regret later (e.g., bringing them into your bed).



The Staller

For the child who will do anything to prolong sleep time...

Before putting your child into bed, you could give them the opportunity to choose one (new) fun thing to do before getting into bed.

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!