

Understanding Your Toddler:

Tips for Helping Your Toddler Sleep



Your toddler sleeps more at night than she did when she was younger. Still, bedtime is not always easy. A relaxing bedtime routine can help her go to sleep and stay asleep.

How to Create a Bedtime Routine

- **Choose Simple Steps:** Some of the things you already do can be part of your routine.
- **Be Consistent:** Do the same steps in the same order every time.
- **Be Patient:** Allow time for your toddler to learn the routine.

Here is an example of a simple bedtime routine. Just remember these words:
Bath-Book-Bed

Bath: Start her bedtime routine with a nice warm bath. Or, you can wash her face and brush her teeth. Keep things quiet and calm so she knows it is almost bedtime.

Book: Read her a book, tell her a story, or sing her a song. Do not play exciting games or let her run and play. You are slowly calming her down so that she becomes sleepy.

Bed: When she is very drowsy, end the routine by putting her in her bed. Say goodnight by rubbing her back or singing calming words over and over.

Tips to Remember:

- A routine is not a schedule. A bedtime routine can be done at any time. It is the order of the steps that is important, not the time on the clock.
- Begin your routine when your child shows you she is tired by yawning or rubbing her eyes.
- The routine does not have to be long. Choose the steps that work best for your family!
- Your toddler will learn the routine in about 1-2 weeks.
- Remove distractions, such as screens, lights, and noises, to help your toddler calm down easier.



Night Waking

Sometimes, your toddler may wake up more often than you expect. Her sleep is still changing. At her age, waking is usually temporary. She is less likely to wake because she is hungry. Here are some tips to help her sleep better.

Tips to Try

- Being excited and playing at bedtime can make it harder for her to go to sleep and to stay asleep. Use a routine to help her relax.
- Give your toddler lots of practice with new skills during the day. When she masters the skill, she will not wake as often.
- Flashing lights and sounds are very exciting to your toddler. Turn off screens and electronics with lights and sounds from the room where she sleeps.
- Your toddler may wake more often when sleeping in a new or different place. It might help to keep familiar objects close by. You can use your bedtime routine, but she may wake up anyway. She will sleep longer when you get home or when she gets used to the new place.
- Your toddler may wake more often when her routine changes. She will sleep longer again when she learns the new routine.
- Your toddler will wake when she is sick or uncomfortable. She will sleep longer when she feels better. Check with your health care professional if you are worried.



When your toddler wakes up in the middle of the night, use a routine to help her back to sleep. Using the same routine each time will help her know what to expect. Over time, she will fall back to sleep more quickly.