**10 Tips for Helping Your Child Fall Asleep**

Help your child sleep through the night with these 10 pointers.

Be on your way to sleep-filled nights with these pointers compiled from doctors, sleep experts, and researchers at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD.

**1.** Avoid feeding your child big meals close to bedtime, and don't give her anything containing caffeine less than six hours before bedtime.

**2.** After dinner, avoid all stimulating activities, says Carol L. Rosen, M.D., medical director of pediatric sleep services at Case Western Reserve University's [School](https://www.parents.com/kids/education/) of Medicine at Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland.

**3.** Warn your child that bedtime is in five minutes or give him a choice -- "Do you want to go to bed now or in five minutes?" -- but do this only once.

**4.** Establish a consistent and relaxing bedtime routine that lasts between 20 and 30 minutes and ends in your child's bedroom. Avoid scary stories or TV shows. It's better to read a favorite book every night than a new one because it's familiar.

**5.** Avoid singing or rocking your child to sleep, because if she wakes in the middle of the night, she may need you to sing or rock her back to sleep -- a condition known as sleep-onset association disorder. (If you have already been doing this, try to phase this behavior out gradually.) Instead, have her get used to falling asleep with a transitional object, like a favorite blanket or stuffed animal.

**6.** Make sure your child is comfortable. Clothes and blankets should not restrict movement, and the bedroom temperature shouldn't be too warm or too cold.

**7.** If your child calls for you after you've left his room, wait a few moments before responding. This will remind him that he should be asleep, and it'll give him the chance to soothe himself and even fall back asleep while he is waiting for you.

**8.** If your child comes out of her room after you've put her to bed, walk her back and gently but firmly remind her that it's bedtime.

**9.** Give your child tools to overcome his worries. These can include a flashlight, a spray bottle filled with "monster spray," or a large stuffed animal to "protect" him.

**10.** Set up a reward system. Each night your child goes to bed on time and stays there all night, she gets a star. After three stars, give her a prize.

* **By Kristen Neufeld, Photo by Ericka McConnell**

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