



Bedtime

However much we enjoy our children's company it can seem like battle sometimes to get them tucked up in bed.

There are lots of reasons children like to stay up, they may feel they are missing out on your company, a special TV show or seeing visitors. They may be uncomfortable, too hot or cold, need the toilet or a drink, be afraid of the dark or simply not like being alone.

If your child won't go to bed without a fuss here are some ideas to change this habit.

First of all start giving your child some extra time during the day with you, this may be an extra story or game before bedtime and it means they are less likely to miss your company once they have gone to bed.

Set a clear bedtime and stick to it, especially in the first few weeks when new habits are starting. Let your children know that you expect them to stay in bed after bedtime and not come downstairs. You could use a star chart and agree to give them a sticker for each night they stay in bed, after they've earned three they can have a reward such as an activity with you.

Check out whether your child is comfortable, make sure their room is the right temperature, that a drink of water is available and there is a night light if necessary.

Before bedtime give your children a reminder, such as "Tom, it's bedtime in fifteen minutes, straight after this TV program ends". Don't have a discussion about bedtime or be persuaded to give extra time downstairs as this shows you are not really serious.

Go through your usual routine to settle them to bed, this familiar pattern and your loving attention helps them feel safe and secure and ready to sleep. If you have younger children you may decide to stay in their room or nearby while they go to sleep, for older children you may go downstairs.

After bedtime if your child comes downstairs or gets up again give one simple instruction such as "Katie it's bedtime go back to bed" then take them calmly straight back to bed. Avoid giving much attention. At first your child will keep

trying to get up, you will need to repeat the instruction and take them back to bed each time until they realise you're serious.

Make a big fuss each morning after they've stayed in bed as they were asked. A good sleep pattern means your child gets the rest they need and you get some space for yourself.

If sleep problems continue call the Children's Fund Triple P on 425 480 for a leaflet or contact your health visitor for further support.

Parents tips'

Richard, father of Jordan, aged three and Ryan, aged five from Bentilee says " If a child wouldn't stay in bed I'd go up and read a story and stay till they go to sleep."

Charlotte, mother of Corey, aged two of Bucknall says "Corey has a hamster in his bedroom and at night his job is to stay upstairs and look after his pet. We also decorated his room with dinosaurs and his favourite colours."



For more information on First Steps
Psychological Service
Please call 01782 425 883

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