

## Going to Bed — And Staying There!

Bedtime. The calmest, most peaceful time of day. You tell your drowsy little munchkins that it's time for bed and they all yell, "Yay!" They run off to get into their pajamas, brush their teeth, and crawl into bed. You tuck all your kiddos in, kiss them goodnight, and head for the door. Their little eyelids are slowly closing. Now, it's time for you to relax!



It's not like this in your house? Actually, it's not like this in ANY house without some preparation, a plan, and some good old consistency.

### The Basic Bedtime Method

It all starts with what we call The Basic Bedtime Method. There are two steps:

1. **Pick a bedtime and stick to it.**
2. **Create a Bedtime Routine.**

#### 1. Time for Bed!

Step one is to pick a bedtime and stick to it. Period. You absolutely must be consistent with the bedtime. Why? Because every time you alter the bedtime "just this once," you're letting your child discover an opening for negotiating bedtime with you each and every night.

#### 2. Bedtime Routine



The next component of the Basic Bedtime Method is setting up a Bedtime Routine. This is what you do:

Set timer for 20-30 minutes. Let your child know that he needs to use the bathroom, put on pajamas, brush his teeth, get a drink, and anything else you can think of before the timer goes off. Older children (about 6 and up) are on their own. The little guys will need more supervision.

Now, let each child know that any time that remains after he has completed his routine is time that the two of you can spend together! Your special time together can be spent either reading or quietly chatting. These activities take place once your child is already in bed. If he doesn't finish his routine in time, he goes straight to bed and the lights go out. No arguing.

### What If They Get Out of Bed?

Kids get up after lights out for one of two reasons, or some combination of both: 1) Boredom: Life is fun, bed is boring and 2) Fear: It's too dark in here, there's a monster in my closet, etc.

For getting out of bed we use the "cut them off at the pass" routine. Here's how it works.

Say you know—if you leave the area—your child will get up right away after your bedtime routine. Immediately after lights out, therefore, sit in the bedroom doorway with your back facing the room. If fear is the issue, having you right there will make him feel more secure. Don't talk to him, don't look at him. Read a magazine or a book until the youngster goes to sleep. No noisy video games on your tablet!

If he gets up, you pick him up and put him back without saying anything. If you get tired of doing this, just let him fall asleep on the floor and cover him up. But commit yourself to two goals: a) He's not leaving that room and b) You're not talking to him. No matter what.



We have another set of tricks for nighttime waking. More on that later!

In the meantime, check out our NEW [Bedtime and Nighttime Waking Laminated Quick Reference Guide](#). This handy guide will give you the insight & tools you need to develop a more deliberate & thoughtful approach to parenting.



### **Bedtime & Nighttime Waking Laminated Quick Reference Guide **NEW!****

This handy, 2-page laminated guide examines Underdog (Permissive) and Big Dog (Authoritarian) parenting styles and gives parents insight into why their approach may not be working. [Learn more](#)