

Tips for Parents of Young Children



Parenting.
Give it time.

Bedtime

(suitable for 3-5 years)

Sometimes your child will fall asleep easily and sleep through the night. At other times they will have difficulty falling asleep and will wake in the night. A bedtime routine may help cut down on bedtime problems.



You might find the following helps:

- **Think about timing.** If your child takes a long time to fall asleep you might be putting them to bed too early. If they get too wound up to sleep you might be putting them to bed too late.
- **Have a bedtime routine.** Do the same thing every night at the same time – drink and (non-sugary) snack – bath – pyjamas – teeth brushed – read a story – lights out. Find the routine that works for your family.
- **Let your child know bedtime is coming up.** “When we have finished this game it will be time to get ready for bed”.
- **Avoid too much stimulation before bed.** Try to avoid loud or boisterous play or screen-based activity like TV, computers, tablets or other handheld devices.
- **Check your child has done everything that might cause calling out later.** Have they had a drink? Been to the toilet? Got their favourite teddy?
- **Give them a safe thing to take to bed** like a teddy, or blanket. Leave a night light on or leave the door ajar. Then tuck your child in and say goodnight.

- **If your child keeps getting out of bed.** Return your child gently and calmly to their bed. Do this as many times as it takes until your child stays in bed. You may have to be very patient.
- If your child goes to bed without making a fuss, praise or reward them the next morning.

If your child keeps waking during the night try to work out why they are waking up:

- **Are they hungry?** If your child is over a year old it may help to give them some cereal and milk last thing at night.
- **Are they afraid of the dark?** Try leaving a nightlight on in their room or leave a landing light on.
- **Are they waking up because of bad dreams?** Try to find out if something is bothering them.
- **Are they too hot or too cold?** Check the heating in the room or add or take away a blanket and see if that helps.

Nightmares are quite common between the ages of 18 months and three years. Your child may be worried about something or might have been frightened by a TV programme or story. Comfort your child and reassure them.

If you're concerned about your child's sleep ask your health visitor or GP.



For more helpful tips on bedtime and on positive parenting techniques, visit: gov.wales/giveittime