

*“In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety”. Psalms 4:8*

We all want peaceful nights and restful sleep. That is hard to do when you have a preschooler who is anti-bedtime.

On average, preschoolers need 10-12 hours of sleep a day, including naps. Sleep is important in their development and overall good health. Resisting bedtime is another way that little ones can try to have control of situations. There are many reasons they may feel the need to do this. They may be delaying fears of the dark or bad dreams. Bedtime is another separation from parents, which can cause some children anxiety. Learning the reason for the resistance can help you know how to work on the problem.

## Final Thoughts

If your child claims he can't go to sleep unless you are with him, you must help him feel secure in going to sleep alone. Follow your calming bedtime routine and offer him a comfort object like a stuffed animal or blanket. Maybe he needs a nightlight in his room. Offer to check on him every 10 minutes, as long as he stays in bed. If he is still awake when you come in, praise him for being so good and quiet, and tell him you will check on him again soon to make sure he is okay. Knowing that you are nearby and coming back soon may be enough to comfort your child enough to doze off.

Your child may be suffering from a different sort of sleep trouble such as having problems breathing, night terrors, sleep-walking or wetting the bed past the age of five. If any of these are the case, contact your pediatrician. This type of behavior falls in the category of sleep disorders and may require more professional assistance.

We realize how tough bedtimes can be on children and their parents. Hang in there and try to stay calm. Many times bedtime problems are just a phase. If you take the proper steps to create a positive bedtime atmosphere, it can go by much easier!

Source: [ministrytoparents.com](http://ministrytoparents.com)

# Sleep Troubles



## Investigate the Problem

If your child is having trouble falling asleep, ask yourself some basic questions to try to narrow down the problem. Is their room too hot or cold? Is it too dark, or is there too much light? Is their bed comfortable? Is it too noisy? Are they afraid of something? Is your child even tired? Being able to narrow down what the issue may be is the first step in solving the problem. Some issues, like temperature or light, may be an easy fix. Others may take a bit more work.

Take a look at your child's bedtime habits and see if any of these apply. Does bedtime seem chaotic? Will your child not fall asleep alone? Does she stay up too late? Will she not stay in their bed? Your home may have one of these problems or potentially a little of all of them.

Bedtime Routine: Toddlers can really thrive on routines and consistency. Your child's bedtime routine must be focused on creating a calming, secure atmosphere in which to fall asleep. Most of us have very busy days. We need to help our children slow down and get ready for sleep. A typical routine may consist of a variety of tasks. The typical routine in my home consists of a warm bath, picking out pajamas, a bedtime story and saying our prayers. We complete this routine almost every night. This allows our kids to wind down from their day. Kids can't, and won't, just stop in the middle of playtime to go to sleep. Creating a quiet, calming bedtime

routine is the basis of solving many problems that arise at night. It helps when children know exactly what to expect.

Fear of Missing Out: Kids may be afraid they are going to miss out on something if they go to sleep. This may be especially true if they have older siblings who are still up. You can help to eliminate this by turning off the television or any loud music. Allowing your entire house to calm down will help children do the same. Maybe your child refuses to go to sleep alone, crying and begging for you to stay in their room with them. Know that giving in to this creates a habit that will be hard to break. Set limits and stick to them. Helping your child feel secure will help him become more independent at bedtime. Try to find out, if he is scared of something or if he just wants more time with you? If you start the habit of staying in your child's bed, you will be expected to do it every night.

Nightmares: Preschoolers have trouble distinguishing what is real and what is not. If your child wakes up afraid of bad dreams, do not belittle her or dismiss that fear. Hold and reassure your child that she is safe. Talk with her and stay until she is calm. Your child may benefit from a security object such as a blanket or a stuffed animal. Make sure your child isn't exposed to scary stories or television shows that may be inappropriate and scare them. Talking about fears during the day can also help them to seem less scary and threatening when bedtime arrives.

## Helpful Tips

1. If your child doesn't seem tired at bedtime, you may want to scale back on naptime or wake him up a little earlier in the morning.
2. Read bedtime stories and sing songs in their room. Let them wind down and get comfortable where they will be sleeping.
3. Give a warning: "After this story, it will be time to go to sleep." This helps the child prepare to go to sleep.
4. Use reward charts for good sleep behavior. Motivate your child to do well!

Sometimes, children will not stay in their bedroom, which can make for a very long night for you and them. You cannot allow bedtime to become a power struggle. If your child continues to get up each night, here is some advice from some professionals about what to do:

1st time up after goodnight – Remind your child that it is bedtime and take him back to his bed. Give one quick kiss, say goodnight and leave the room.

2nd time up – Repeat. Use a more firm voice and keep it brief.

3rd time up – Say nothing. Lead the child back to their room, place him in bed and leave the room. Repeat this last step as many times as it takes for them to stay in bed.

Kids will call your bluff, so stick to the routine. This may result in tears, fits and wailing, but be firm. Once kids realize that getting up repeatedly isn't getting them anywhere, they will back off and hopefully stay put.