

## Sleep Tips

1. Select a week that you have no outside obligations in the evenings, no one visiting you and let your neighbors know if you worried that they will think you are a neglectful parent. To do this successfully you need to devote all your time and attention to your child.
2. Create a nighttime routine, a relaxing bath, a favorite story, a sweet lullaby, a book on tape and then it's time to go to sleep. Follow the routine as consistently as you can.
3. If you are use to rocking your child to sleep remember to lay your child down when she is still drowsy and not in a deep sleep. Avoid becoming a "sleepaide": let your child put herself to sleep. If she is fed, tired and not wet she will eventually go to sleep and when she does wake up she won't expect or demand you. You want to give her the opportunity to learn how to fall asleep or back to sleep on her own.
4. Don't fell like you have to be real quiet when your child is asleep. She needs to get use to sleeping through anything.
5. If your child is going to learn to sleep through the night you have to learn to tolerate some crying. Experts repeat that a little crying won't hurt your child. Besides, learning to tolerate some frustration makes them more resilient which is a good thing.
6. After you completed your child's bedtime routine, tuck her in, kiss her good night, and then leave the room. What if she cries?
7. Let your child cry the first night, try this for about 5 to 10 minutes (whatever you can tolerate) and then go in and reassure her that you're here and she's fine. Do it with words but don't pick her up or cuddle her or rub her back and certainly don't cry in front of her. When she realizes that mom is not going to reinforce this behavior with anything positive, the behavior is more likely to stop.
8. Repeat this the next night and the next, each time increasing the waiting time by five minutes or so each night.
9. With older children, talk to them in advance and let them know that when they wake up they need to stay in their own bed. If they come to your bed, take them back to their own bed and tuck them in. Stay for as short a time as possible. Remind her "this is your bed and this is where you sleep and now you have to go to bed". Repeat the routine if you have to with composure and a no nonsense approach. Think of it as a job. It will pay off in the long run and you can expect to get a good night's sleep again. As a more rested person, you will also be a more patient and happier mother.

Older children may start to procrastinate going to bed, getting more demanding with routines stretched by asking for juice, another story, claim that something hurts, they're scared, etc. Set limits, be consistent and stick to it. Remember, by the time a child reaches age 4, they sleep about 12 hours on the average and drop their naps.

**For more information refer to an old classic on this subject *Solve your Child's Sleep Problems* by Richard Ferber, M.D.**