

Bedtime Fading

One reason your child may have difficulty going to sleep at night is due to their internal clock. Although you may have tried to have an early bedtime, your child rarely goes to sleep before a certain time. *Bedtime fading* matches your child's bedtime with their natural sleep onset time to reduce bedtime problems. Once your child learns to go to sleep quickly at the designated time, then you can begin to gradually move their bedtime earlier. The following provides advice on how to use bedtime fading with your child.

1. **Your child's new bedtime will be _____.** This means you should start their bedtime routine about 30 to 45 minutes before this, at _____.
2. **Your child's wake time on both weekdays and weekend days will be _____.** If they do not wake on their own, you will have to wake them at their time.
3. **In between their previous bedtime and this new bedtime, your child should engage in quiet activities that do not involve electronics.** This can include reading, drawing, or playing with quiet toys.
4. **After 5 to 7 nights of your child falling asleep quickly (in under 30 minutes) and easily, you can begin to move their bedtime earlier by 15 minutes.**
5. **To reach the desired bedtime of _____ you can then move their bedtime earlier by 15 minutes every week** (but only if they are falling asleep quickly and easily).

Important Things to Remember

- Your child must have the same bedtime and wake time every night, both during the week and on weekends.
- Although it may seem strange to move your child's bedtime later, they are not really getting any less sleep than they are right now. Your child rarely (if ever) goes to sleep before the new set bedtime, and this way they will learn to go to sleep faster at bedtime, reducing bedtime protests and struggles.
- **DO NOT** move their bedtime up too quickly! Gradual changes to bedtimes and wake times are not as noticeable to the body, with children adapting to the new time within about a week. However, rapid changes (e.g., 1 hour at a time) will be very noticeable and will make going to sleep harder for your child.

Some children cannot go to sleep early because of their natural internal clock. Bedtime fading addresses this issue by helping your child learn to go to sleep quickly at a set bedtime. Over time, you will be able to gradually move this bedtime earlier, reducing the bedtime struggles that often result from a child who is simply not tired at the designated bedtime.
