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Love and Logic®

End the Bedtime Blues

Parents Don't Need to Force Kids to Go to Sleep

Bedtime is a time of frustration for many parents. They wish it could be a magical time to reconnect with children and share fond memories. Here are some easy ways to make those dreams come true:

Bedroom Time vs. Bedtime

The journey to bedtime bliss starts with renaming bedtime. Kids need to think of this time as "bedroom time." It's a time for them to be in their rooms, but not necessarily with their eyes closed. Wise parents never try to control the uncontrollable. "*You get in your bed and go to sleep, right now!*" creates a power struggle over something parents cannot control. A skillful child can keep a parent engaged with this argument for hours.

Slowdown Time

Bedroom time is a journey in itself. It starts with "slowdown time." A slowdown routine is essential. Children's brains operate at a high pitch and don't shut down as quickly as adult brains. Parents should announce the beginning of slowdown time about 40 minutes before bedroom time.

Slowdown time includes turning off stimulating activities such as television, exciting music, and family games. It also is a wonderful time to give kids choices:

- *"Do you want to go to bed right now or in 10 minutes?"*
- *"Do you want to brush your teeth in the kitchen or the bathroom?"*
- *"Do you want a story first or your bath first?"*
- *"Do you want a drink in the kitchen or in your room?"*
- *"Do you want a piggy back ride or walk on your own?"*
- *"Do you want the light on or off?"*
- *"Do you want to get tucked in or do it yourself?"*
- *"Do you want to go to sleep right away or try to keep your eyes open as long asyou can?"*

There is magic in choices. They speak directly to the human need for control and can produce amazing results. Be sure to offer choices you like. Never give one choice you like and one you don't.

The kids are given no more than 10 seconds to make their decisions. If it takes longer, make the decision for them. Kids become quick decision-makers when they know their parents will be making the decision for them if they don't act quickly.

Some children like to negotiate in the face of choices. Resist the temptation to argue or reason at this time. Use Love and Logic® arguing neutralizers, such as "I love you too much to argue about that, maybe you'll like tomorrow's choices better." Repeat this phrase as often as necessary without sarcasm or anger.

Remember there is nothing more contagious than a yawn. Experiment with yawning and acting sleepy during story time. It's great fun to watch the drooping eyelids.

Parent Time

Once the kids are in their room, that's where they stay. Announce that "kid's time" is over and it is now "parent's time." Stick to your guns on this.

Kids have been known to resort to, "It's scary in here. There's monsters in my room."

Just remember kids take their emotional cues from their parents. The best solution is to respond in a firm, yet loving way: "Well, sweetie, my advice is to make friends with them. See you in the morning. I love you!"

Give these Love and Logic tips a try, and join thousands of parents who enjoy peaceful evenings with their kids!

People who are really successful implementing this skill purchased Painless Parenting For the Preschool Years II

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