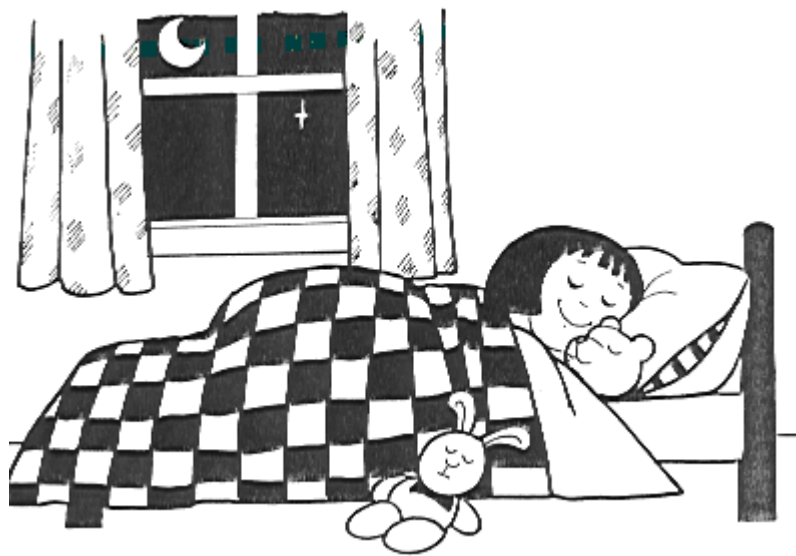


# Establishing a Bedtime routine that works for you and your child





- A goodnight's sleep is vital for your child's development. Children benefit from a daily 11 to 12 hours sleep.
- Sleep helps our brains develop.
- Sleep helps us to:
  - have good behaviour
  - concentrate better
  - have a healthy appetite
  - improve our communication skills
  - improve our memory
- It is recommended that bedtime for children should be between:
  - 7 pm and 7.30 pm for children up to age four to five years.
  - 8pm to 9pm for children up to age 10 to 12 years.

## Lack of sleep can cause problems



**Poor Behaviour**  
'Would you quiet down? I can't hear myself yelling at you!'



**Lack of concentration!**



**Aggressive and angry outburst!**



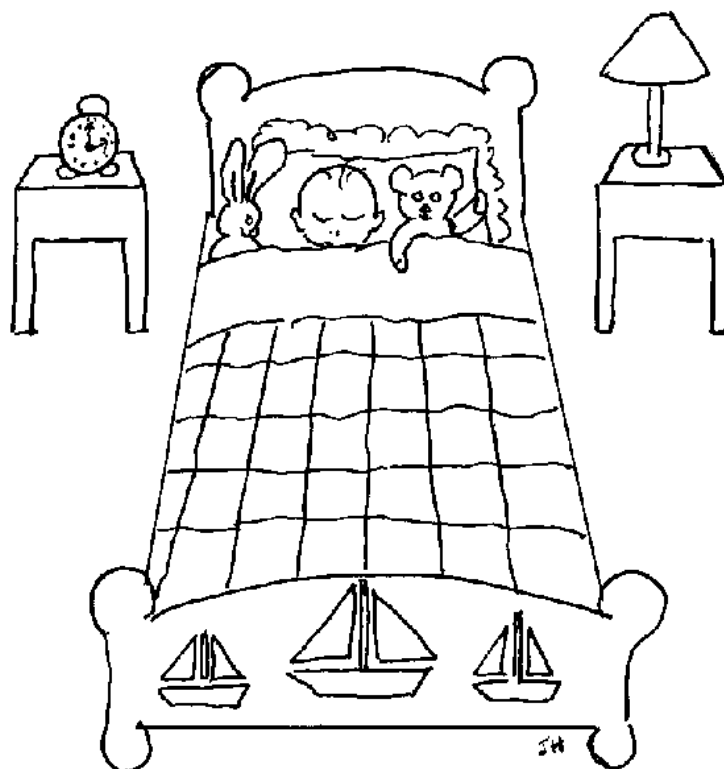
**Confusion!**



**Temper Tantrums!**

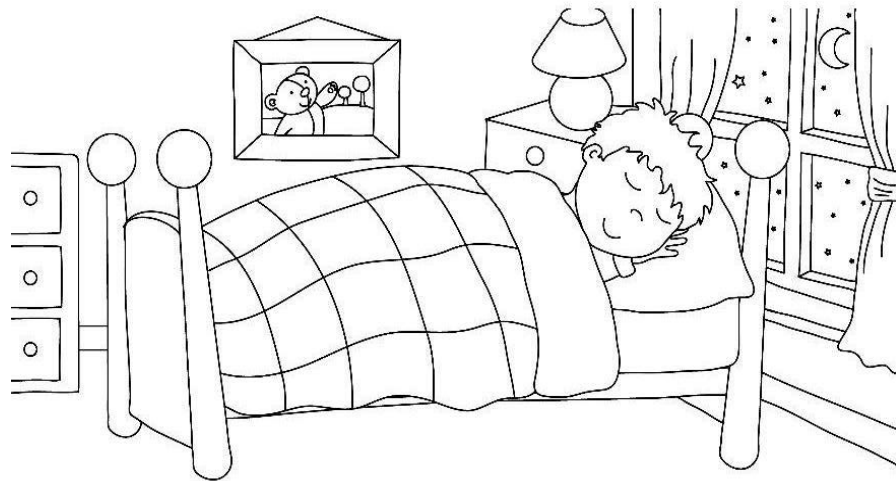
## Good bedtime routine activities

- Be consistent.
- Keep to the routine each night so your child knows that sleep is part of the normal routine.
- Include bath time in your regular routine - the soothing warmth will help prepare your child's body for rest.
- Share a reading book together.
- Leave the room while your child is still awake.
- Allow your child a nightlight or soft music.
- Reassure your child that you will come back and check on them during the night.
- Remain calm when your child calls for you.
- Always put your child back to sleep in their own bed.



## Setting up a bedtime routine

- Encourage calm before bedtime, with activities like reading and quiet play.
- Remind your child that in five minutes or at the end of the story it is bedtime.
- Start off your child's relaxing routine with a bath
- Use gently reminders of what is coming next whilst they are in the bath. For example: after your bath you will brush your teeth and put your pyjamas on. – Use symbols if necessary.
- In bed, keep the lights low, read a story or chat about the day
- A kiss and a cuddle and leave your child's room.



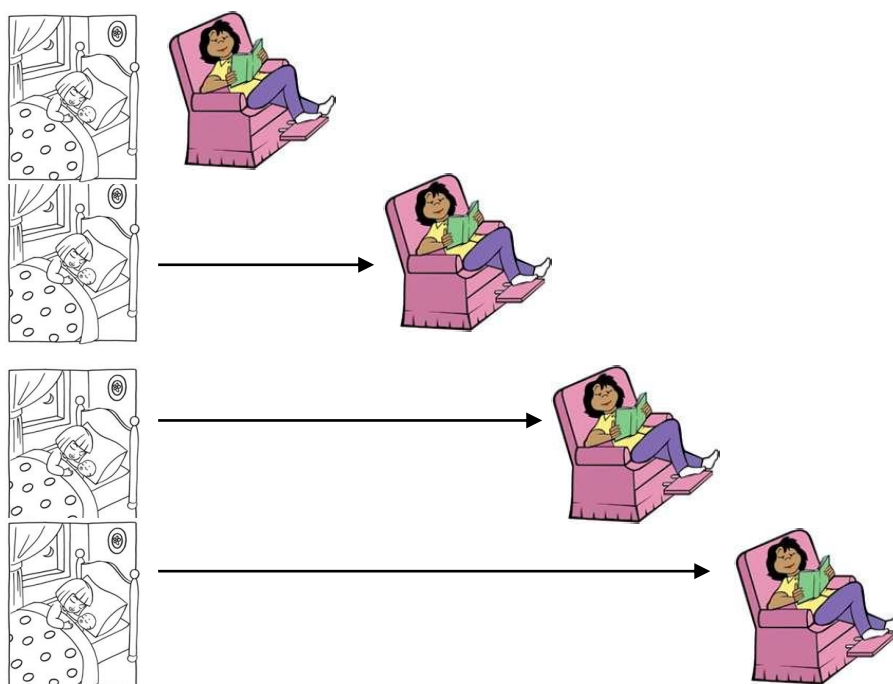
# DON'T!

- make TV part of the routine
- Allow frequent interruptions to the bedtime routine.
- Make lying down together or rocking your child to sleep part of the routine
- Pick up your child if they continue to call out to you. **INSTEAD, SIMPLY REASSURE HIM/HER THAT YOU'RE NEARBY.**



# The Disappearing Chair Routine

1. Put your child to bed with his/her usual routine.
2. Sit in a chair beside his/her bed reading a book (you can pretend to do this).
3. If your child is very upset you may need to sit on the bed.
4. Don't speak to or look at your child.
5. If your child tries to get out of bed or sits up gently return him/her to the lying down position.
6. Every night the distance between you and your child should be increased. When the chair is outside the bedroom door you have finished **the disappearing chair routine**.
7. Your child should be sleeping through the night in his/her own bed.



This process can take as long as you and your child need - several days to several months. Be prepared for the problem to get worse for a night or two. In some cases this just means that your child is testing you to see if you are really serious.

Making a new sleep routine is best started on a Friday night so that you are not under pressure and can outlast your child's attempts to sabotage the new routine.

This is only an outline. Each child is different and changes may need to be made before the routine is successful.

## **Graded Withdrawal**

1. lie next to your child on the bed for three nights
2. lie on a mattress or floor next to the bed for three nights
3. move your self closer to the door every three nights
4. sit on a chair in bedroom at door with door open for three nights
5. sit outside door whilst still visible for three nights
6. sit outside door not visible to your child for three nights
7. sit outside room with door closed for three nights.  
(Optional – repeat step six if necessary).



Remember **BEDS** are for Sleeping!

If your child does not currently sleep in their own bed then you may need plenty of **PATIENCE** as they fight against changes in their routine.

**STICK** to your new routine and you will get results – but it may take some time to break old habits.

