Free guide for parents

Yochai Leshem

Bedtime without battles

Four steps to a calmer evening: routine, a quiet return, feeling safe, and you

Why children fight sleep

Sleep is a separation: from you, from the day and from play. Children are also afraid of missing out, and often they are simply too tired. A child who has passed his moment of tiredness doesn't look tired, but bouncy and argumentative, and then it's even harder to fall asleep. So the first rule: a predictable, calm evening, and bed before tiredness turns into a battle.

1 A fixed evening routine

When every evening looks the same, the brain knows what comes after what, and starts calming down on its own:

- A fixed bedtime, weekends too, with a little flexibility.
- The same order every evening: dinner, bath, pajamas, teeth, story, hug, lights out.
- A board with pictures of the steps, which your child marks himself.
- The hour before sleep: no screens, dim light and quiet play.

Prepare all the requests in advance: a glass of water by the bed, the bathroom before the story, the favorite toy in its place.

2 When he gets out of bed: boring, calm and repeated

- Take his hand and quietly walk him back to bed.
- One fixed sentence: "Now it's time to sleep. Good night." No explanations and no negotiating.
- And if he comes out again, the same thing again. Even ten times.

A request card: once an evening he may ask for another hug, water or a question. After that the card stays with you until tomorrow. And in the morning, celebrate success.

When to get advice

Loud snoring or pauses in breathing during sleep, a child who sleeps a lot and is still very tired, trouble falling asleep that lasts despite a good routine, or extreme night fears. Start with the pediatrician.

3 Teach falling asleep alone, feeling safe

The gentle method: the moving chair. Each stage lasts a few days, until it's easy:

- A chair right by the bed, you may stroke and sing quietly.
- The chair in the middle of the room, no touching.
- By the door, and then outside the door where he can still hear you.

"I'll come back to check on you in five minutes", and you really come back. A child who knows you always return stops fearing you'll disappear.

4 And you: you deserve an evening too

Everything here takes a calm, consistent parent. So:

- Decide together, both parents, and act the same way.
- Look at the direction over two weeks, not at one hard night.
- Keep quiet time for yourselves after the children fall asleep, and a reasonable bedtime.

Afraid of the dark? Take it seriously without making it bigger: "I see it's scary, and I know you can do it." A small night light and a guardian toy help.

✂ Cut out and hang by the bed

Your fixed good-night sentence

Now it's time to sleep. Good night.

Or our own sentence:

_____

Want the full picture?

The "Bedtime Without Battles" course includes six short video lessons, a summary sheet for each lesson and a task for each week. The first lesson is free to watch.

parenting.yochai-leshem.com/en/sheina.html

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