

Bedtime for Toddlers and Preschoolers

by Tom Dozier, BCaBA

www.guaranteedpt.com

925-371-1576 tom@guaranteedpt.com
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1

Bedtime for Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Routines
- Extinction
- Expectations
- Bedtime Pass



2

Bedtime Routine

- Scheduled time
- List of activities
 - Take bath
 - Put on pajamas
 - Brush teeth
 - Say prayers
 - Get into bed
 - Read book
 - Hugs and kisses
 - Sleep time



3

Bedtime Routine with fun

- Scheduled time
- List of activities
 - Brush teeth
 - Take bath (make this a fun, calm activity)
 - Put on pajamas
 - Say prayers ← Insert a piggy back ride to or around the bedroom
 - Get into bed ← Lay on bed with child
 - Read book
 - Hugs and kisses
 - Sleep time ← Bring child a drink or check in on child if quiet for 5 minutes



4

Extinction – What is it?

- Why do we do things?
 - To get something we want
 - To avoid or delay something we don't want
- Extinction – No payoff for the behavior



5

Extinction for Bedtime

- Proven effective through extensive research
- Works for all ages of children
- Protests, crying, calling you, and coming out of room at bedtime
 - What is the typical payoff?
 - Attention
 - Avoids/delays isolation



6

Extinction

- Extinction is planned ignoring of these behaviors
- You must ignore the protests, crying, and calling out as if it did not happen
- Preparing for bed
 - Be nice and have empathy
 - Don't let protests slow down the process
- If the child comes out, simply return the child to bed
 - Do not say anything
 - Do not pick up the child
 - Do not give a hug or a kiss
- BEWARE OF THE EXTINCTION BURST
- Consistency is very important
- This is very difficult for most parents



7

Bedtime Expectations

- Have the child help you make the list of routine
- Add a bonus activity for getting ready bed with a good attitude (and quickly)
 - An extra book
 - A brief activity, such as singing the child a song
 - A smiley-face on a chart
- Have the child repeat the expectation
 - Respond in a happy, positive, and enthusiastic way



8

Bedtime Expectations

- Tell the child what you expect her to do in bed
 - Lay still
 - Stay quiet
 - Keep eyes closed
 - Keep head on pillow
- Have the child repeat the expectation
 - Respond in a happy, positive, enthusiastic way
- Is there a reward possible?
 - Smiley face on chart
 - Coming back to check on child
- For younger children, practice bedtime as a game with a payoff (attention/snack)



9

Bedtime Expectations

- At bedtime (once in the bed) have the child tell you what is expected
 - If the child is low in verbal skills, have the child show you
- Tell the child that you will come back and check on him to see that he is doing these things
 - Return to the room to catch the child being good
 - If the child looks at you, simply walk away
- Use extinction as needed



10

Bedtime Pass

- Effective for 3-year-old and up
 - May work with younger children with good verbal skills
- Make a "bedtime pass" which is a 3x5 card



11

Bedtime Pass

- Teach your child that the bedtime pass can be used for 1 free request
 - drink of water
 - go to the bathroom
 - a hug from you
- After the bedtime pass is used,
 - You will not respond to calling out
 - You will return the child to his room if he comes out without saying anything or a hug
 - This is extinction



12

Bedtime Pass

- This procedure eliminates the extinction burst
- Parents still need to be consistent with extinction after the pass is used
- Effective almost immediately
 - Sometimes several days
- The bedtime pass will often go unused



13



Tom Dozier

Guaranteed Parent Training

5801 Arlene Way, Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 371-1576 tom@guaranteedpt.com
www.guaranteedpt.com



14