

FamilyGram

MORNING AND BEDTIME STRATEGIES FOR WEARY KATY PARENTS

Hang on! Help is on the way. Try these super strategies and helpful tips for making family life easier.

by *Katy Magazine's Editors*



How much sleep does your child need?

Toddlers 12-14 hours
Preschoolers 10-12 hours
School age 9-11 hours
Teenagers 8-9 hours

Morning Musts

LOVE FIRST Start the day with something good. A happy song, reading a positive Scripture or saying, a big hug, or something that sets a positive tone.

HAIR TIPS For hard-to-handle girls' hair, brush and braid the night before and simply touch up in the morning. Also, keep a squirt bottle handy for early morning bed head.

DROP ZONE Keep backpacks, school supplies, jackets, and homework projects ready to go by the front door for easy grabbing.

CHECKLIST Post a whiteboard by the front door with a daily checklist of "out the door" things kids have to remember: Backpack, lunch, homework, etc.

MUSIC FUN Turn on upbeat music to get the family energized and moving. Turn it off 10 minutes before leaving so your child understands that when the music stops it's time to go.

PRE-PACK Pack lunches, prepare clothes to wear, take showers, and mornings will go much more smoothly. The more you can do the night before, the better.

ALARM CLOCKS Give each child in the house an alarm clock (with no snooze button) and praise them for waking up on their own without your help.

LEVEL ONE BRUSHING Keep toothbrushes and toothpaste in the downstairs bathroom and kitchen sink for brushing after breakfast in the bathroom closest to you.

Bedtime Basics

DIGITAL SNOOZING Have everyone turn in their digital devices to the family charging station (in the parent's bedroom) to prevent kids from nighttime digital distractions.

FIND A ROUTINE Establish a nightly routine that is the same most every night. Dinner, bath, quiet time, story time, prayer, and lights out, for example.

BEDTIME BELL Give kids a courtesy reminder that bedtime is nearing, then set a nightly timer. Let the timer announce bedtime instead of you.

NO TVS OR COMPUTERS To encourage your child to get a full night's rest, remove any TVs or computers from their bedroom.

WIND DOWN TIME Begin quiet time at least 30 minutes before bedtime. It's hard to get drowsy when you just finished having a wrestling match with dad.

SLEEPY TIME TRAINING Teach your child how to lull himself to sleep. Singing a song in their head, counting from 99 backward, or other body relaxation techniques starting from the feet to the head are great helpers.

SURPRISE BREAKFAST For a child who refuses to sleep in his own bed, entice him with a surprise breakfast. When he sleeps in his bed all week, on Saturday he awakens to a surprise breakfast. (Streamers, horn blowers, and a favorite breakfast food is all you need for this special, fun reward.)

STICKER FUN Think of easy, little rewards for when bedtime goes smoothly. Something as simple as getting to put a sticker on a chart first thing in the morning works great.

TURN IT DOWN Start speaking in hushed tones around bedtime to set the mood for drowsiness and rest.

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