



Bedtime Routines Worksheet

Activities	Occurs	Is the activity easy (E) or hard (H)?	Is the activity stimulating (S) or relaxing (R)?	Rank in order of preference (1,2,3)
Taking a bath				
Washing hair				
Changing into pajamas				
Getting a drink				
Brushing teeth				
Using the washroom				
Singing quiet songs				
Reading				
Other:				
Other:				

Using the information from the worksheet, plan a bedtime schedule for your child. Begin the routine with the hardest and/or stimulating. For example, if brushing teeth is hard for your child, then put it first in the routine.

Order	Activity	Is the activity easy (E) or hard (H)?	Is the activity stimulating (S) or relaxing (R)?

Making a Bedtime Schedule

Use the worksheet on the opposite page to create a bedtime schedule for your child. I have included a number of common bedtime activities, however, there is space to add your own to the list.

Think about each activity and whether they are easy or hard for your child. Put an “E” next to the activities that are easy and an “H” next to the activities that are hard. It’s best to include only easy bedtime activities in your bedtime routine. If your child (or you) finds an activity difficult then either remove it from the schedule, or place it at the beginning of the routine. For example, if brushing teeth is hard for your child, do it first, then move on to easy activities as you get closer to bedtime.

Next, think about each activity and whether they are stimulating or relaxing for your child. Put an “S” for the activities that are stimulating and an “R” next to the activities that are relaxing. Some activities may be easy, but also stimulating. If reading books are stimulating, find another time in the day to incorporate that activity when an exciting activity can be handled.

Once each activity is rated, rank the activities in the order of your child’s preference. Keeping in mind that hard or stimulating activities should be done at the beginning of the bedtime routine, if at all. You can use this list to plan a bedtime schedule for your child. Creating a bedtime routine is something you can do on your own, with the child(ren) or as a family. Your child may have some good ideas about what will work for them. You can come up with the plan together, especially if it is developmentally appropriate.

Other Things to Consider

Activities which emit blue light such as television screens and electronic devices may appear relaxing to the child, however, the blue light that is coming from the screen mimics that of daylight and is stimulating rather than relaxing. The body does not think it is night time and will not release the hormone melatonin, to aid in sleep. Activities that include a screen should be limited to at least an hour before bedtime. An alternative is to have a reward to have screen time in the morning, if sleep goes well during the night.

Take a look at the bedroom environment. The bedroom should be cool, dark and quiet and free from stimulating electronics. Some children benefit from white noise, such as a fan, humidifier, or white noise machine that is continuous throughout the night. If a nightlight is required, choose an amber shade of light as it is the most relaxing.

If your child is old enough to follow a visual schedule, consider using pictures, photos or real objects to remind the child what is next in the routine. This can decrease the power struggle and helps with developing a routine. Teach your child to look at the schedule to see what is next in the routine.

A bedtime routine should last 15-30 minutes and should be in the same order each night. The body learns to start relaxing and getting ready for sleep with consistency and relaxing activities.