



Parenting Bedtime Nightmare Over: How to Deal with Bedtime, Kids, Discipline and Fast!

By Kelly Nault. M.A.

When parents say, "It's bedtime, kids!" discipline frequently follows.

If any (or all!) of the following sound familiar, know you're not alone:

- "One more story...pleassssse!"
- "I need another glass of water."
- "Can I stay up just 15 more minutes?"

Bedtime delays are an epidemic problem that plagues most households. If it's not one more story, it's "ten more minutes" of their favorite show or dawdling in the bathroom. We've all been there.

Bedtime + Kids + Discipline + Anger = Parenting Chaos

When your child puts up a fight at bedtime, responding with anger can often create even more problems. Your best bet is to be firm, yet loving. How?

One of the most effective parenting methods I have found is outlined on page 152 of my book *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You*. Here it is:

1. Tell Your Child What You Are Going To Do.

Say something like, "Part of what I love to do with you is read stories at bedtime, but sometimes I feel frustrated when bedtime takes a lot longer than it needs to be. So from now on, I will be at your bedside promptly at ____ PM to tuck you in. If you are not there at that time all ready to be tucked in, I will start getting ready for bed myself. If you would like a hug you can come and find me for a quick one, but I will not return to your room."

2. Parenting Follow Through.

As stated be in their room on time. Give them one five-minute warning if you feel it is necessary (although it is not). If they are not ready, leave and be prepared to keep your mouth shut at all costs, regardless of tears, angry words or pleas to be tucked in. Go into the bathroom, lock the door, and get yourself ready for bed. Give one hug if they ask, then continue with your tasks. If they try to get you involved, simply say, "I'll be happy to speak with you in the morning. Sweet dreams." And that is all.

Responding to difficulties in this way encourages your children to be punctual and when it comes to bedtime.

Kids' discipline doesn't have to be harsh to be effective. Going to bed without a story is a commonsense consequence that results from bedtime dawdling. Usually, even a small consequence like this is enough to encourage your son or daughter to make good time management choices the next night.

Dealing with the Boogieman

Fears are natural, and your children will face many throughout their lifetime. The best thing you can do is to help them learn to deal with these fears, including the fears they face at bedtime.

Take time to understand your son's or daughter's fears, and validate their feelings—but stay firm on the need for them to stay in their own room at night.

Instead of letting them take refuge in your room, help them find ways of making it safe. Each time your child comes into your room, take them back to their own room and stay with them for a couple of minutes. Tell them that you have faith in their ability to handle the situation. Instead of telling them there is no boogieman, ask them what the boogieman is like, why he is there, and what he wants.

You can even brainstorm with your child possible ways to live together peacefully with this creature. Suggest writing a note to the boogieman or visualizing a magical fortress that protects their bed. When they make it through a night on their own, encourage them.

Silent Night...All Is Calm in Parenting World

With a little bit of practice, nighttime doesn't have to be fight time at your house. You don't have the fear the words, "It's bedtime, kids!" Discipline and angry words aren't good approaches, but gentle, loving, firm patience that encourages your child to make good decisions is right on target.

Before you know it, bedtime dawdling will be gone for good!

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at www.UltimateParenting.com.

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