



**Little Dreamers**

**REST FOR THEM. RELIEF FOR YOU.**

**A LITTLE DREAMERS PARENT TOOLKIT**

# **Don't Wait Until**

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# **the Night Before**

*A gentle 14-day ramp-up for school starts, time changes, and any schedule shift ahead.*

For families with children ages 3-8

*Rest for them. Relief for you.*

[www.littledreamerssleep.com](http://www.littledreamerssleep.com)

# Welcome

Every August, the same thing happens: school starts in a week, and bedtime is still on summer time. Parents try to fix six weeks of drift in one night — and that night is rough on everyone.

This guide stops that pattern before it starts. Instead of a hard reset the night before, you'll shift gradually over 14 days — so the first morning of school already feels normal.

■ *A gentle two-week ramp beats a jarring one-night reset, every time.*

## Why the Night-Before Reset Backfires

Moving bedtime up an hour overnight asks a child's body clock to do something it can't do quickly. The result is usually a long, resistant bedtime, a rough wake-up, and a first day running on too little sleep.

A gradual shift works with your child's internal clock instead of against it. Small nightly changes are easy to absorb; one big one isn't.

### TRY THIS TONIGHT

Check tonight's actual bedtime against your target school bedtime — that gap is exactly what the 14-day plan will close.

## Your Summer Routine Isn't Ruined

If bedtime crept later over summer, that's not a setback to undo — that's normal. Summer routines are supposed to be looser.

This guide isn't about erasing summer. It's about gently walking the schedule back toward the school-year rhythm, while keeping what's worth holding onto.

### Worth keeping from summer, if it worked

- ☐ A wind-down activity your child genuinely enjoyed (reading outside, a family walk)
- ☐ Slightly later, unhurried mornings on weekends
- ☐ Any relaxed rule that didn't cause problems — no need to tighten it just because school's starting

# The 14-Day Ramp-Up Plan

Start two weeks before the first day of school. Each block shifts bedtime and wake time further toward your target — small enough your child's body barely notices.

## Days 1-3

**Sleep shift:** Shift bedtime & wake time by 10-15 min

**Also do this:** Keep everything else exactly the same

## Days 4-6

**Sleep shift:** Shift by another 10-15 min

**Also do this:** Start morning light exposure earlier

## Days 7-9

**Sleep shift:** Shift by another 10-15 min

**Also do this:** Move any screen cutoff earlier too

## Days 10-12

**Sleep shift:** Final 10-15 min shift — near target time

**Also do this:** Rehearse the actual morning routine once

## Days 13-14

**Sleep shift:** Hold at target bedtime/wake time

**Also do this:** Do a full dry run of the school morning

If your child resists a shift on a given day, hold that bedtime for one extra night before moving on — the order matters more than the exact pace.

## TRY THIS TONIGHT

If school starts in two weeks or less, start with Days 1-3 tonight — even a late start beats no ramp at all.

# Prevention Beats Damage Control

The biggest mindset shift here: this isn't a reset to fix something that went wrong. It's prevention — a small, steady adjustment made early, so there's nothing left to scramble for the night before.

Parents who start two weeks out consistently report calmer first-week mornings than those who try to fix everything in one weekend. Fourteen easy nights beat one hard one.

*You're not behind. You're just starting the shift two weeks earlier than the panic usually does.*

## Your 14-Day Tracker

*Fill in your planned bedtime for each day and check off whether it went to plan. Don't aim for perfect — aim for mostly-on-track.*

**Day 1** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 2** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 3** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 4** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 5** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 6** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 7** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 8** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 9** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 10** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 11** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 12** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 13** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 14** — New bedtime: \_\_\_\_\_ Went to plan (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

## Sources and Important Notes

This guide is educational. It doesn't diagnose or treat a sleep disorder and isn't a substitute for your child's pediatrician.

**WHEN TO CALL:** Contact your pediatrician if sleep difficulties are persistent, disrupt daytime functioning, or come with frequent snoring, breathing pauses, gasping, or pain. Seek emergency care for severe breathing trouble, blue/gray lips or face, or a child who can't be woken.

## More Help When the Struggle Changes

Every Little Dreamers guide is free and stands on its own. Grab whichever one fits tonight.

- Bedtime SOS — quick-match fixes for 10 common bedtime struggles, ages 2-7
- The 14-Day Back-to-School Sleep Reset — the school-specific version of this ramp-up, with morning rehearsals and first-day prep, ages 3-8
- The Stay-in-Bed Reset — a 7-night plan for repeated exits and stalling, ages 3-7
- The Single-Parent Bedtime Survival Kit — a simpler routine built for doing bedtime alone
- Two Homes, One Familiar Bedtime — keeping bedtime consistent across co-parenting households

*All free at [littledreamerssleep.com](https://littledreamerssleep.com)*

## When the Night Changes, Your Plan Can Change With It

This 14-day plan gets you through this transition — but schedule shifts come up again and again. Little Dreamers, our app, keeps building with you: a routine that adjusts as your child grows, a log that spots patterns you're too tired to notice at 2am, and a place to loop in every caregiver so the plan doesn't reset every time someone new is on duty.

### Little Dreamers — the app

- ☐ Personalized routines that adjust to your child's age and your family's approach
- ☐ Bedtime stories and calming sounds, in English and Spanish
- ☐ Sleep logs that turn tonight's notes into a pattern you can actually see
- ☐ Caregiver sharing, so grandma and the babysitter get the same plan you do
- ☐ Step-by-step guided support for the nights a printable can't cover alone



**Scan to try Little Dreamers**  
*Rest for them. Relief for you.*  
[www.littledreamerssleep.com](http://www.littledreamerssleep.com)

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