



**Little Dreamers**

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

**A LITTLE DREAMERS PARENT TOOLKIT**

# Single-Parent

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## Bedtime Survival Kit

*A gentler, one-parent guide to nights when you're doing this entirely on your own.*

For parents doing bedtime solo, of children ages 2-7

*Rest for them. Relief for you.*

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

# Welcome

Doing bedtime alone, every night, is genuinely harder than doing it as a team. Not because you're doing it wrong. You're doing two jobs at once — staying calm for your child, and running the whole routine yourself.

This guide isn't about doing more. It's about doing less, on purpose — so the parts that matter most survive the season you're in: connection, consistency, and an actual bedtime for you too.

*You don't need a longer routine. You need a routine that doesn't need backup.*

## Why Single-Parent Bedtime Burns You Out Faster

With two adults, bedtime naturally splits: one does the bath, one reads the story. Solo, it's all you — back to back, no break, no one to hand off to when your patience runs low.

The fix isn't willpower. It's a routine short enough that it never needs backup.

### Three shifts that help immediately

- ☐ Shrink the routine before your patience shrinks. Fifteen calm minutes beats forty resentful ones.
- ☐ Pick your one non-negotiable — usually the story or the tuck-in. Let everything else flex.
- ☐ Stop re-explaining the plan each night. Predictable routines settle kids faster than negotiated ones.

#### **TRY THIS TONIGHT**

Pick your one non-negotiable part of bedtime right now, before tonight starts. Let everything else be flexible.

## Brush. Book. Bed.

This is the whole routine. Three steps, same order, every night. Short enough to survive a bad day. Simple enough that your child can predict every step — which is what actually builds security.

## Step 1 — Brush

Bath, teeth, pajamas, bathroom — bundled into one block. Under 5 minutes. This is logistics, not connection time — don't over-invest here.

## Step 2 — Book

One book. Not 'just one more,' three times over. Try: 'One book is our bedtime book — I'd love to read more tomorrow.' This is your connection moment — give it your full attention.

## Step 3 — Bed

One short closing line and one physical goodbye — a hug, a phrase, a song line. The same one, every night. This is the cue that tells your child's body it's time to settle.

*Same three steps, same order, every night — that repetition does more work than any single step.*

### TRY THIS TONIGHT

Tonight, run only these three steps — nothing added, nothing skipped — and notice how much shorter bedtime feels.

## They're Not Stalling — They're Having Trouble Saying Goodbye

The extra water, the sudden question, the fourth hug — easy to read as manipulation. It almost never is.

For a lot of kids, bedtime is the one moment the day's separation actually lands: no more you until morning. Stalling is often a clumsy 'I'm not ready to be apart yet,' not a bid to win a negotiation.

## What actually helps

- ☐ Name it gently: 'It's hard to say goodnight, isn't it? I'll be right here in the morning.'
- ☐ Give one specific reassurance instead of an open negotiation — 'I'll check on you after this song' beats a vague promise.
- ☐ Hold the boundary warmly. Empathy for the feeling doesn't mean reopening the routine.

The goal isn't zero requests. It's answering the feeling underneath them, so the requests lose their charge.

**TRY THIS TONIGHT**

Next time your child stalls, try the one gentle line above instead of a new negotiation — then hold the boundary.

## Tonight's Win Wasn't Falling Asleep Fast

As a single parent especially, it's tempting to measure success only by speed. That's the wrong scoreboard — it turns an ordinary rough night into a failure, and it's the fastest route to burnout.

A better measure: did the routine stay calm? Did you hold your boundary without losing your temper? Did your child feel connected before lights out? A 25-minute night that stayed warm beats a 10-minute one that ended in a shouting match.

### Use the tracker on the next page

Each night, write down one thing that went right. Over a week, that becomes real evidence a stopwatch would miss.

**TRY THIS TONIGHT**

Tonight, instead of timing how fast your child falls asleep, write down one thing that went right.

## Your 7-Night Wins Tracker

*Print this page, or fill it in on your phone. One line a night — that's the whole assignment.*

### Night 1

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### Night 2

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### Night 3

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### **Night 4**

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### **Night 5**

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### **Night 6**

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

### **Night 7**

One thing that went right:

How bedtime felt (1-5):

## **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 — shifting the schedule before the first school morning, ages 3-8
- The Stay-in-Bed Reset — a 7-night plan for repeated exits and stalling, ages 3-7
- Two Homes, One Familiar Bedtime — keeping bedtime consistent across co-parenting households
- Don't Wait Until the Night Before — a gradual 14-day plan for travel, time changes, or any schedule shift

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

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

This guide gives you a starting plan. Little Dreamers, our app, keeps building it 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



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*Rest for them. Relief for you.*

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