
SLEEPING

However much we love our children you do get a sense of relief when they are tucked up in bed and fast asleep. The rest of the evening is yours, or is it?

You might put the child to bed but then there might be a struggle to keep them there.

Alternatively, the child might go to bed but wake up several times in the night. Sleeping problems can play havoc within a family. Tired parent patience can be pushed to the limit and tempers can easily get frayed. In the heat of the moment things can be said which are hurtful.

While each situation should be considered individually there are some tips which may be useful. Having pre bedtime routines helps the child to wind down and realise bedtime is coming. They know what to expect. Keeping a gentle but firm handle on the routine helps so the parent is focussed on the task in hand, getting the child to bed and not being side-tracked by the child using delaying tactics. Once in bed, any ploys to keep Mum or Dad running to and fro should be dealt with in a matter of fact manner. Little or no conversation - just the message it is bedtime!

Children who have been good sleepers and go through a wakeful period may be anxious about some matter. So if that is the case, it could be helpful to consider what has been happening recently to the child.

Difficulties with children sleeping are common. If you are having a problem, it is best to seek help at an early stage rather than let it drag on until everyone is worn out and fed up.

Q

My little boy of two used to be a great sleeper until his baby brother arrived. Now he is up two or three times a night wanting into our bed. It's bad enough getting up to feed the baby but now I'm hardly in bed at all.

A

Sleep deprivation is hard to cope with. You can see the connection between the child being wakeful and the arrival of the new baby. Try to look at the time that you have to give to your son during the day. If other friends and family can look after the baby for short periods this would give you the opportunity to be with your two year old. This will give him extra reassurance at a time when he will be feeling a little put out. When he does wake at night do put him straight back to his bed. You may need to be very persistent with this to make it clear to him that he has to sleep in his own bed. Do ring us for some support if you wish as this can be a stressful time for all.

