

## The Importance Of Bedtime Routines

(NAPSA)—One of the best things you can do for your child is also the hardest to stick to: establishing regular bedtime routines. Not only do they give youngsters a sense of stability, but—done right—make bedtime more comforting.

“Rituals add balance and order to kids’ lives, which is why they love them so much,” explains Dr. Renee Cherow-O’Leary, a professor at Columbia University’s Teachers College and president of Education for the 21st Century. “And bedtime is a perfect time to establish rituals that can actually strengthen family bonds.”

Yet given the complexities of modern life, it’s not surprising that studies show that such ritualized bedtimes are on the decline. Experts suggest developing a schedule to help keep your children on track:

- **Dinnertime**—Bedtime rituals should begin well before the lights go out. Start by eating dinner together every night. It’s a great way for a child to hear the family’s conversations about the day and for kids to learn to be more communicative.

- **Bath Time**—After dinner comes the bath, which can be a wonderful way for the child to relax and feel the comfort of cleanliness and warmth. Try establishing some favorite bath-time games with your kids, as well.

- **Relaxing Time**—Unwind with your child by reading a favorite book or by watching an appropriate children’s program with him or her. For preschool-aged children (2 to 5), PBS KIDS Sprout’s “The Good Night Show” is purposely designed as a tool to help parents relax kids before bedtime. “Segments last from 5 to ten minutes,



**PBS KIDS Sprout’s “The Good Night Show” helps preschoolers ease into a bedtime routine.**

making children’s pleas of ‘just one more’ doable,” said Andrew Beecham PBS KIDS Sprout’s senior vice president of programming. The show airs every evening from 6 to 9 Eastern Time and repeats from 9 to midnight for families in different time zones. Kids can learn from its “Good Night Guide” Nina, who links Sprout’s programming with learning-based activities like stories and songs. She also teaches yoga, sign language and basic Spanish.

- **Sleepytime**—Ideally a time of what Dr. Cherow-O’Leary calls “closeness and closure on the day,” it should be used for quiet talk. “Use phrases that trigger memory, such as ‘Wasn’t it fun when we saw that squirrel in the park today?’” she suggests.

- **Bedtime**—Other rituals help, such as listening to a particular story or song, or being reassured or rocked. “They can make bedtime feel more predictable and safe,” says Dr. Cherow-O’Leary.

PBS KIDS Sprout is the only network that provides preschool programming 24 hours a day. Visit [www.sproutonline.com](http://www.sproutonline.com) for more information.