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Moving Parents Out

Many children have difficulty falling asleep without a parent in the room. To teach your child to fall asleep by himself, we need to gradually move you out of the room. The following provides guidance on how to move yourself out of the room at bedtime while not causing too much stress for your child.

1. **Have a consistent bedtime routine and a consistent bedtime in place.** For your child, this routine should include: _____ _____ and should end at _____ p.m.
2. **At the end of the routine, you should place your child in bed awake, and then stay with him until he is asleep.**
3. **Don't interact too much with your child.** This is not the time for questions or conversation. If your child tries to interact with you, have a consistent, simple response (e.g., "It is time to sleep now, I love you").
4. **After 3 to 5 nights of your child falling asleep relatively easily, you will move a little bit further away.** For some children this will be 1 to 2 feet every few nights. With other children, you can move first to the middle of the room (between the bed and the door), and then after a few more successful nights move to the doorway. The last move will be to the hallway outside the door (out of view of the child).
5. **When your child wakes during the night, you should respond immediately and consistently.** For your family, these responses should include _____ _____.

Important Things to Remember

- Your child may protest or try to interact with you more on the second night than the first night!
- If your child continues to try and interact with you, take a short break and return only when he agrees to lie quietly in bed.
- If your child gets out of bed and comes to you, simply return him to bed with minimal interaction, saying, "It's sleeping time, you need to stay in bed."

By gradually moving yourself away from your child at bedtime, he will learn to fall asleep without you there. Although it may take a little while to reach the goal of him falling asleep independently, you should see fewer "curtain calls" and bedtime protests, making bedtime less stressful for everyone in the house.