



Three Steps to Bedtime

A Three-Step Bedtime Routine

Create a simple three-step bedtime routine. Repeating the same sequence helps your baby recognize that sleep is coming and experience steady care and connection.

Helps Your Child Grow



Sense of Identity and Belonging

A consistent bedtime sequence helps your baby anticipate what comes next and feel secure within a familiar family routine.



Attending and Understanding

Repeated words, expressions, and tones during the routine help your baby connect familiar cues with getting ready to sleep.



Bedtime Checklist

Bedtime Checklist	
☐	Bath
☐	Sleep Sack
☐	Story
☐	Lights Out
☐	Cuddle

What You'll Need

1. A bedtime checklist with three familiar steps, such as bath, pajamas, and a book



Begin the Bedtime Routine

As bedtime approaches, show your baby the checklist and begin the first familiar step. Use the same short announcement and the same order each night so your baby can begin to anticipate bedtime.

Observations

- ☐ Looks toward the bathroom or responds when they see you begin the bath
- ☐ Shows a more relaxed face or body after the bath

Tips

- A bath can be the first step if it is already a calming part of your family's routine.
- The sequence may take time, but repetition helps the rhythm become familiar.



A Quiet Story

Make shared reading a regular bedtime step. Hold your baby close and use a soft voice. Watch for sleepy cues, then end the book at a natural moment and move toward lights out.

Observations

- Shows anticipation when you bring out the bedtime book
- Looks at you or vocalizes while listening to the book

Tips

- During the book, a familiar comfort item or pacifier can make the routine feel more recognizable.
- If your baby is still alert, reread a page softly or switch to gentle humming.
- Yawning, rubbing the eyes, fussing, or slower movement can signal that your baby is becoming sleepy.



PM 9:30



Bedtime

Say Good Night

Use one clear, consistent signal, such as dimming the light and softly saying, “Good night.” Settle your baby for sleep and stay calm and present as the familiar routine ends.

Observations

- Settles into a lying position after the familiar bedtime signal
- Gradually settles to sleep with your soothing

Tips

- Begin the routine early enough to complete the familiar steps without rushing or skipping them.
- Your baby may take time to fall asleep at first. Keep the sequence and your response steady while it becomes familiar.
- If your baby cries in the crib, stay beside them and soothe them with a soft voice or gentle pat while keeping the bedtime sequence consistent.