



Bedtime Pass

What is Bedtime Pass?

- Bedtime pass is a strategy for helping children get to bed on their own without too much fuss. It's best used with kids ages 3 to 10 who have a hard time going to bed on their own. If your child calls out to (e.g., "Can you come back in?"), cries or yells, or leaves their room at bedtime, the bedtime pass might help, but it's important that other good sleep habits, like having a regular bedtime routine, are in place first.

How does it work?

- **Step 1: Talk with your child about what to expect.** It's important that your child knows why you are using the Bedtime Pass and how it will work.
 - Talk with your child about how they're having trouble going to sleep on their own and that you have come up with an idea of how to help (e.g., "I know that it's hard for you to go to bed on your own. So, I have an idea that may help.").
 - Explain how the pass will work. You can say something like, "You and I are going to make a pass for you to use each and every night. You will get one pass per night. After I put you to bed, you can use the pass for one free trip out of the room. So, if you want one last hug or one last trip to the potty, that's fine. Once you use your pass, then you need to give it to me and go straight back to bed."
- **Step 2: Create the pass.** You and your child can make the pass together. You can use a note card, thick cardboard cut out to about the size of a small photograph, or some other sturdy material. Let your child decorate the pass with coloring, writing, or stickers.
- **Step 3: Start using the pass.** Now it's time to put the Bedtime Pass in action!
 - Just before bed, hand your child the pass and remind them how it should be used. Follow your normal bedtime routine and then leave the room.
 - If your child chooses to use the pass, that's fine. Once they are done with their short, specific activity, take the pass. Send your child back to bed, reminding them that it is now time to stay in there and be quiet.
 - If your child calls out AFTER using the pass, ignore this behavior. Even if they escalate, continue to ignore the behavior.
 - If your child comes out of the room AFTER using the pass, gently guide them back to bed with no/minimal interaction. Try to stay as calm and neutral as possible.
 - For the first few nights when you are using the pass, remind your child of the rules of using the pass, give him/her a pass, and follow the same routine.

Increasing the Success of the Bedtime Pass

- For the first few nights when you are using the pass, remind your child of the rules of using the pass, give him/her a pass, and follow the same routine.
- Praise your child for using the pass and for going to bed as expected.
- Letting your child pick breakfast (within reason) or provide a small prize on mornings after not having any bedtime behavior problems.
- Consider an afternoon/after school treat or privilege if your child didn't call out or leave the room at all the night before.
- For older children, you can make the rewards longer term, like staying up later on Friday if there was minimal bedtime resistance during the week.
- Remember, if you are offering incentives, make sure that your child only gets them when they use the bedtime pass just as you taught them to (or if they don't need to use the bedtime pass at all that night). Also, think about providing more rewards at first, and then decreasing the rewards over time.

Prep for Success

When is a good time to talk with your child about the Bedtime Pass, and what can you use to make it?

What are some ideas for a small reward you could provide in the morning after nights your child goes to bed without resistance?

Is there anything you think will be challenging about using Bedtime Pass? If so, what are some ideas for solving that issue?
