



## Sleeping Sound

# Primary School Children: Bedtime Pass

**For prep children, bedtime should ideally be no later than 8.30pm**

### Set bedtime.

Decide on a suitable bedtime for your child. Establish a regular bedtime to help set your child's internal body clock. Be sure that your child is ready for sleep before putting them to bed.

### Bedtime Pass

For children who have a difficult time staying in their bedroom or cry out, making a bedtime pass for your child may be valuable. The steps for the *bedtime pass* are:

- Sit down with your child and explain what you are going to do.
- Explain that your child is having difficulty going to sleep on his or her own and that you have come up with an idea of how to help (e.g. "I know it's hard for you to go to sleep so I have thought of an idea for you").
- Explain the strategy- say something like "You and I are going to make a pass for you to use every night. You will get one pass per night. After Mum or Dad has put you to bed you can use the pass for one free trip out of the room, for some specific reason, e.g. if you want to give Mum or Dad one last hug or one last trip to the toilet. If you do use the pass you need to give it to Mum or Dad and go straight back to bed". *Stress that it needs to be a short specific reason (5 mins or less).*
- Explain what happens after the child has used the pass, e.g. "After you use your pass, you need to go back to bed and stay there for the rest of the night".

You and your child should then make the pass. You can use cardboard or note cards cut to about the size of a small photograph as long as the pass is sturdy. Allow your child to colour in or write on the pass to make it their own.

Just before bed, hand the pass to your child and remind them of the purpose. Follow your typical bedtime routine and then leave the room. If your child asks to use the pass, allow this and then take the pass. Send your child back to bed and reminding him or her that that it is time to stay in the room and be quiet.

If your child *calls out* AFTER using the pass, ignore this behaviour. Even if this behaviour gets worse, continue to ignore the behaviour. If your child *comes out of the room* AFTER using the pass, physically guide them back to bed with no or minimal talking.

For the first few nights when you are using the pass, remind your child of the rules of using the pass, give them the pass and follow the same routine.

Remember to reward your child for being able to use the bedtime pass and stay in their room after that (see *Rewards* handout). Try your strategies for a number of nights (3 to 7 days). Being consistent will increase your chances of success with improving your child's sleep patterns. If possible, make sure you and others caring for your child do the same thing as well.

