

The 30-min toddler bedtime

A timed wind-down for ages 18 months to 4 years.

A FREE GUIDE FROM
BABY SLEEPING COACH

A note before we start. This guide is for general education only. It is not medical advice. If your child has any medical condition, suspected condition, or symptom that concerns you, please consult a qualified paediatrician before making any change based on this guide. See the full medical disclaimer at babysleepingcoach.com/terms.

Why 30 minutes

Research on melatonin onset shows that once the sleep hormone starts releasing, you have roughly 30 minutes to get into bed before it dissipates and your child re-energises. Routines that run 45 to 60 minutes consistently miss the window. Routines shorter than 20 minutes do not allow proper wind-down. 30 minutes is the sweet spot.

The four-step sequence

- **Bath.** 10 minutes maximum, warm not hot. Skip on alternate nights if you want.
- **Book.** One book. Maybe two. Not three. This is where the negotiation starts.
- **Brush.** Teeth, hair, brief chat. Calm and matter-of-fact.
- **Bed.** Into the cot or bed, lights out, brief words, walk out.

Minute-by-minute (print and stick on the wall)

6:30	Lights low everywhere. Quiet play only.
6:35	Bath start. 10 minutes.
6:45	Bath end. Pyjamas, nappy or potty, sleep sack.
6:55	Brush teeth. One song while we brush.
7:00	Book in the bedroom. Soft light only.
7:15	Lights out. Brief goodnight. Walk out.

Handling 'one more book'

The negotiation will come. The answer is the same answer, every night, for 7 nights: **'We always read two books at bedtime. Tomorrow we'll read again.'** No explanation, no extension, no fold. Toddlers stop negotiating when the answer is reliably the same.

When bedtime goes off the rails

- If the bath is the trigger, skip it for 3 nights. Wash in the morning.
- If the book is the trigger, shorten to one book and read it twice.
- If putting them in bed is the trigger, sit on the floor for 2 minutes, then leave.
- Whatever the trigger, hold the bedtime time. Bedtime drift is the deeper problem.

Want a plan built for your child, not for the internet?

The full Sleep Reset program includes a 90-minute private consult, a 6-page personalised plan, and 2 weeks of text and iMessage support. Book your free 15 min discovery call at babysleepingcoach.com