

Bedtime Pass

For children who have a difficult time staying in their bedroom or call out frequently, making a Bedtime Pass may be helpful. Your child can use their Bedtime Pass for one trip out of their room or one visit from you after you have said “Goodnight”.

Explain the bedtime pass to your child

1. **Sit down with your child** and explain what you are going to do.
2. **Explain that your child is having difficulty** going to sleep on their own and that you have come up with an idea of how to help (for example, *“I know it’s hard for you to go to sleep so I have thought of an idea for you”*).
3. **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 a reason such as if you want to give Mum or Dad one last hug or you need a drink. 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 minutes or less).
4. **Explain what happens after** the child has used the pass, for example, *“After you use your pass, you need to go back to bed and stay there for the rest of the night”*.

Bedtime Pass

Exchange for one short trip out of your bedroom after bedtime.

Make the pass

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.

At bedtime

Just before bed, hand the pass to your child and remind them of its 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 remind them that that it is time to stay in the room and be quiet.

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.

What if my child calls out or comes out of their room AFTER using the pass?

If your child calls out: Ignore this behaviour – even if it gets worse.

If your child comes out: Take them back to bed with no or little talking.

Rewards

Remember to reward your child for being able to use the bedtime pass and stay in their room after that. Reward good behaviour in the morning, as rewards can really motivate a child to improve their behaviour. Rewards work best when given soon after the behaviour not after a few days. See the *Rewards handout* for more ideas.

TIP: HAVE A CONSISTENT AND CALMING BEDTIME ROUTINE

Being consistent is very important to help children wind down and be ready to fall asleep. These, and other habits for good sleep are discussed in the Good Sleep Habits handout.

TIP: HAVE A REGULAR BEDTIME

This will help set your child's internal body clock so they are ready for sleep when it is time for bed.

If your child is not falling asleep at a suitable time, start by taking them to bed at the time they usually fall asleep, and gradually make bedtime earlier. See the Bedtime Fading handout for more details.