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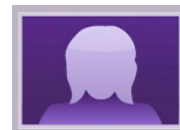
It's Bedtime

Susan Hodara



Susan Hodara

Interview by Susan Hodara



Does your daughter want to stay up later? Here's how one family is working it out.

Mary Ann: "My son, Ryan, is 6, and Kirsten is 11. Both my husband and I work, and by the time we get home, have dinner, do homework and take baths it's already 9 o'clock. So I would always just say, 'O.K., everyone, time for bed.' But recently Kirsten approached me to say this wasn't fair and that she wanted to stay up later than Ryan."

Kirsten: "My bedtime was way too early. Some kids in my class who have older brothers and sisters get to stay up really late. Plus, there are television shows that end at 10, and I didn't want to miss them."

Mary Ann: "I could understand why Kirsten felt it was unfair that she had to go to bed at the same time as a 6-year-old, but I also want her to get lots of sleep. I wasn't sure a later bedtime was such a good idea. Besides, there are times when a parent just has to make the rules and lay down the law. I thought bedtime was probably one of those times."

Kirsten: "But at my age, it's fairer and more fun if we can get together and come up with a solution instead of my mom just making a rule and saying I have to follow it. I kept asking, and we ended up talking about it a lot. Finally we came up with this 'two nights' rule. On two nights of the week, I can stay up until 10. On the other nights, I go to bed earlier."

Mary Ann: "Not quite as early as I would like. It ends up being between 9:30 and 10. We also have an understanding that is she has trouble going to bed or getting up early enough in the morning, we will have to reconsider the whole bedtime question. But so far Kirsten is getting good grades in school, and she's up and ready to go on time."

Kirsten: "Yeah, and I feel a lot better that you trust me to handle going to bed later. Now I don't feel as if you're treating me like a baby."

Mary Ann: "Actually, as you get older, I hope all our problems turn out to be this easy to solve. I think maybe this is a good model for us to follow."

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