

How to Get Your Child to Stop Sleeping In Your Bed

While some parents don't mind a 'family bed' others find getting elbowed in the face and kicked in the head all night isn't conducive to a good's night rest. Letting kids sleep in your bed might affect your relationship with your partner too.

Convincing your child to sleep in his own bed can be a challenge once he's gotten into the habit of sleeping in your bed.

Whether your child refuses to fall asleep in his own bed or he ends up crawling into your bed halfway through the night, kids who don't want to sleep alone can be persistent.

Fortunately, there are some things you can do to take back your bed if you're tired of sharing. Here are seven ways to stop kids from sleeping in your bed.

1. Make Your Child's Room Sleep-Friendly

Before you begin insisting your child stay in his room all night, make sure his room is sleep-friendly. A soothing environment calms night time fears and promotes sleep.

Each child's idea of what a relaxing environment looks like is different, however. While one child may enjoy some white noise and a night light, another may want a stuffed animal, complete darkness, and utter silence.

Experiment with a few different things to see what helps your child feel most relaxed. Easing night time fears can be key to getting your child to sleep independently.

2. Create Clear Expectations

Talk to your child about the change in sleep habits that you're going to make ahead of time. Say, "You've been sleeping in my bed every night since you were sick two weeks ago. Tonight you're going to start sleeping in your bed again."

Validate your child's feelings. Rather than say, "Don't be scared," say, "I know you feel scared and I'm sure you're [strong](#) enough to stay in your own bed even when it feels scary."

Show empathy if your child protests. Say, "I know it's scary to sleep alone when you're not used to it but I know you can do it." Then, make it clear that you expect your child to stay in his own bed all night too.

3. Take it One Step at a Time

If your child has been sleeping in your bed for a long time—perhaps even all of his life—he will need a little help with the transition to his own bed. Create a [step-by-step plan](#) that will help your child become more independent a little at a time.

For example, you may tell your child he can sleep in your room but only on his mattress on the floor. Or, you may sleep in his room with him until he grows a little bit more comfortable. Then, slowly transition him to sleeping in his bed on his own.

4. Establish a Helpful Bedtime Routine

A [healthy bedtime routine](#) will help your child unwind and get ready for sleep. A warm bath, a few good books, and some cuddling can help your child get ready to sleep in his own bed.

Then, when it's time for lights out, shut off the lights and leave the room so he can practice falling asleep on his own.

5. Be Consistent

While many parents want to consistently return a child to his own bed when he sneaks in their room during the middle of the night, they're often too tired or frustrated to be consistent. But if you want your child to stop sleeping in your bed, you have to send a clear consistent message every single night.

If your child sees that his [persistence and protests are effective](#), you'll teach him he can manipulate you with misbehaviour. Be consistent in returning your

child to his bed and don't make exceptions that say he can sleep in your bed because he's tired or because you had a rough day. Sending mixed messages will only prolong the problem.

6. Provide Positive Reinforcement

[Reward your child](#) for sleeping in his own bed. [Sticker charts](#) work well for toddlers and pre-schoolers. [Token economy systems](#) motivate older children to follow the rules.

Tell your child he can earn, "Two tokens for staying in his own bed all night," or that he can earn the right to stay up an extra 15 minutes tomorrow night if he stays in his bed. Combine rewards with [praise](#) and make it clear that you're pleased with your child's progress.

7. Problem-Solve Proactively

You will likely encounter a few problems when getting your child to sleep in his own bed. Perhaps he sneaks into your room so quietly you don't even hear him (in which case hanging a bell on your door might help wake you).

Or maybe, you're having another baby and your child is sleeping in your room because he's a little jealous of his new sibling. If this is the case, providing extra one-on-one time during the day can help him get the positive attention he needs.

When your child seems to regress, or you're encountering problems that get in the way of getting him to successfully sleep in his own bed, take a step back. Examine the potential reasons why and problem-solve how to address the issue most effectively.