

READING

Talk

Bedtime

It's commonly recommended to **have a bedtime routine that becomes predictable** to the baby over time. These routines naturally provide great opportunities to maximize language learning. However, be aware that if a bedtime ritual becomes too long it can become a chore for you and a less enjoyable interaction time for you and your baby. Here are some areas you might wish to explore during the bedtime routine in your home. Just remember, they are not intended to ALL be used EVERY night.

- Read, Read, and did we mention Read? **Make sure you read at a variety of times, not just bedtime.** If kids associate books only with bedtime, they might resist settling down to try to delay the bedtime process. However, reading at bedtime can be an excellent way to relax a baby. **Position your voice close to his/her ear to establish the best condition for optimal speech sound perception** (hearing sounds clearly).
- **Sing Lullabies.** They are soothing to the baby and also **provide exposure to varying melody and pitch with enhanced vowels.** It doesn't really matter if you are singing the right words. In fact, there's benefit to merely humming the melody too!
- Tucking a favorite teddy into its bed can be a fun ritual and opportunity to **practice associating the words with actions.** For older toddlers this is a great daytime game too. Children enjoy playing "go to bed" and "wake up!" This also helps your baby learn the bedtime routine for a smooth transition to bed.
- **Use the predictability of a bedtime routine to help develop linguistic prediction.** As your child approaches two years of age, try some sentence closure where you stop to let him/her fill in the end word. For example, "It's time to brush your _____" or "It's bedtime so let's go put on your _____." You could add silly answers to see if they notice (e.g., time to brush your nose).
- After reading the classic book *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, you could **start a ritual of saying goodnight to things in the room**, such as toys, furniture, light and window. Say goodnight to your toes and your nose or your chin and your shin as you kiss your baby at those places.
- As your older baby begins to really listen and understand simple stories, try to **tell him/her the story of his/her day.** Initially keep it very short but then stretch bit by bit, so you **provide practice listening to stories without pictures.** Since the child is the star of the story the motivation and interest is often high. For example, "Once there was a boy named Pete, and when he woke up he had pancakes for breakfast. Then he went to the park with his mom. He had so much fun! The end!" You could also preview the next day's plans in story form. Have FUN! 

Routines naturally provide great opportunities to maximize language learning