

In defense of no time for bedtime

Within reason, my young son doesn't really have a set time he has to go to bed. That's because I enforce no time for bedtime. It's just not what he needs.

It is true that my situation is different than a lot of people's. I'm a single mom, so there's no big hurry to get the kid off to bed because some great romance awaits with my husband. Also, my son is home-schooled, so he doesn't have to get up early to rush off to school, either. Nonetheless, I do wake him up around 7:00 am every morning. That's the rhythm we've established for our lives – so experts be damned!

As a baby he had difficulty [sleeping late](#), but he always got enough sleep. [Overscheduling](#) children remains a huge problem for children of his generation, creating needless stress for them when they have natural self-regulating qualities that we should nurture.

I realize I am on the other side of just about everyone out there when it comes to my opinions on no time for bedtime. Some experts [write](#) that kids should have an early bedtime or they will suffer from it because of lost sleep, disruptive schedules or other arbitrary problems that just doesn't happen to him.

Fortunately, there are others who are also in agreement with my philosophy of no time for bedtime. Scientists are now reporting that our biological clocks impact our circadian rhythms, and they are unique to individuals. According to the [National Institute of General Medical Sciences](#), scientists have identified genes that direct circadian rhythms in people. These genes can be linked to various sleep patterns and are also responsible for how the body reacts to light signals, the single biggest factor in regulating sleep.

It is because of these unique gene factors that we have our own individual rhythms. There should be no time for bedtime precisely because it's unfair to impose standardized values on what, for my child at least, can vary. My son is different than most people in how he approaches sleep, I

admit. No time for bedtime works for him because he doesn't need the sleep others do.

I'm a morning person and am lucky if I can stay awake past 10:00 pm. Most nights I can't keep my eyes open past 8:00 p.m. It's just the way I am. My mother is the opposite – she knows what was on the late-night shows. Recent health studies indicate that [sleep problems seem to run in families](#). My son is like her in this regard to staying up late — he seems to be a "night person" who frequently plays until 11:00 p.m. or later. No matter because he's always up and feeling great in the morning.

Although many parents believe kids should have early bedtimes, [new research](#) also seems to show that, as far as adults go anyway, night people are more intelligent than morning people. Productivity and commitment values are present in people who sleep less. But don't tell my son that or I'll never hear the end of it!

Vincent Van Gogh, Benjamin Franklin, Cary Grant, Charles Dickens – these are but a few geniuses who had voracious intellects and [didn't sleep](#). They're famous for no time for bedtime.

Of course kids need sleep and sometimes lots of it. Intellectual and physical growth is dependent on getting enough sleep, in addition to proper nutrition and other basic needs. My son is almost as tall as I am and is perfectly healthy, so don't tell me he isn't getting enough sleep because of an arbitrary value set by some doctor! It's just that he's different than most other kids.

I guess you could argue he may be less bratty if I made him go to bed earlier, but I have my doubts. His bratty-ness seems pretty ingrained, and I'm not sure if any amount of sleep can help that.