

I Can Fall Asleep On My Own!: 16-36 Months

When your child falls asleep on his own, he is:

- Beginning to understand that when he's tired he needs to sleep
- Learning to comfort himself when he's in his room
- Learning to follow a bedtime routine

Ideas to try with your child:

- Have a set bedtime and nighttime routine. Toddlers need 10-14 hours of sleep each day including naps. Start getting ready for bed about an hour before bedtime by playing and talking quietly.
- **A simple bedtime routine for your child might include:** A warm bath; brushing teeth before or after the bath; give him the toy or "snuggly" he wants to sleep with. Sing quiet songs or play soft music in his room and turn lights down low or turn on a night-light.
- When he's in bed: say "Good Night," give him a hug and a kiss, lay him in his bed, tuck him in, say "See you in the morning," and leave the room. At about age 2, toddlers often move to a toddler or twin bed. If he gets out of bed, repeat the "Good night" process and firmly insist he stay in his bed.

If your child is struggling:

If your child begins crying when you start leaving the room, tell him "Good night" again and that you'll check on him in a few minutes. Keep your promise. You may need to repeat this firmly several times in the beginning.

Going further:

- Some good bedtime stories for children: [Goodnight Moon](#), by Margaret Wise Brown and [Going to Bed Book](#) by Sandra Boynton
- Resources for parents include: [Touchpoints](#) by T. Berry Brazelton
- For additional sleep tips check out <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/sleep/tips-and-tools-1.html>



The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 16-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.

Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: "Sleep well. Wake up rested and ready to be active", *Growing Up Healthy, Ages 16-36 months*, pg. 47