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Two-Week Bedtime Plan, Ages 4 to 12

Build one simple bedtime response and record two weeks without scoring your child. This plan does not diagnose anything, does not set a melatonin dose, and never overrides a red flag.

Pause the plan and call the pediatric clinician for any of these. Frequent loud snoring with gasping or pauses in breathing. Unusual movements. Painful legs. Wandering that is not safe. A sudden loss of skills your child had. Marked daytime sleepiness. A new change after a medicine started. Call 911 for severe trouble breathing, blue or gray color, a first or prolonged seizure, serious injury, not being able to wake your child, or immediate danger. None of these is a behavior problem to work through.

1 Four to six steps, in the same order every night

The routine works because the sequence becomes predictable, not because the steps are special. Choose ones that can still happen on a difficult night.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

2 One short, calm line for returns

The same words each time. Brief and boring is the point — it is not coldness.

3 A pass system, if you use one

A small, defined number of acceptable reasons to come out: the bathroom, one hug. Set the number with your child, and with the clinician if a plan is already in place.

Number of passes _____ What they can be used for _____

No pass rule outranks a real need. Illness, pain, trouble breathing, getting to the bathroom safely, or anything on the red-flag list above.

Education, not medical advice. Evidence and U.S. guidance checked through September 8, 2026. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 or use the 988 Lifeline chat. For an immediate threat to life or a medical emergency, call 911. Outside the United States, use your local crisis or emergency service.

This worksheet accompanies the essay *Bedtime Is a Battle: Sleep for Ages 4 to 12*. Clinical review: Fady Boules, PMHNP-BC.

Record estimates after the night, not during it. Never wake your child for data. Some protest early on is common — but a new fear, pain, trouble breathing, vomiting, or unsafe behavior is not part of a plan working, and it is not something to ride out.

Date	Lights out	Returns or checks	Est. asleep	Waking in the night	Notes, or anything that concerned you

On a hard day. Lights out, roughly when your child fell asleep, and the main reason the plan changed. That is a complete row.

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