

A Clinical Treatment Guide to 10 Common Pediatric Behavioral Problems

Nighttime Accidents



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Nighttime accidents

1. Prerequisites to nighttime toileting.

Your child should be capable of daytime toileting, with minimal or no accidents occurring for a period of weeks. If your child is not toilet trained to a sufficient level, you should implement daytime toileting first before tackling nighttime accidents.

1. When is your child eliminating at night?

Prior to any formal strategy, it is necessary to establish the pattern of your child's nighttime eliminations. This is called collecting baseline information. To accomplish this, you will designate three to five "checkpoints" in which you will check your child while she is sleeping to determine if she has had an accident. This definitely needs to be recorded on a nighttime accident data sheet. For example, you might schedule three checkpoints at 10 PM, 12:30 AM, and 3 AM. Do this for least 10 -15 nights, to get an estimate of your child's nighttime pattern.

2. Teaching your child to awaken at night

You should waken your child to go to the toilet about 15 minutes before the checkpoint. You may have to adjust this awakening schedule if you see that the bed is usually wet when you awaken your child. The premise is to catch them before they are usually eliminating and teaching them to wake up and eliminate in the toilet. Have your child go to the toilet and sit for least 5 to 8 minutes. If your child eliminates in the toilet, provide praise, clean your child and send her or him back to the bed. If your child does not eliminate quickly while on the toilet, have your child stay on the toilet until eight minutes have elapsed. Do this for each of the impending checkpoints during the night. Again it is necessary to record both accidents, which involves eliminating in the bed prior to being awakened as well as eliminations in the toilet. You can still use the nighttime accident data sheet.

3. Teaching your child to self awaken.

Once you start to see that your child is waking up ahead of your prompt, you can start delaying the awake process by waiting 15 to 20 minutes from the initial time. Tell them before bedtime that if they wake up, they can call out and let you know they are going to the bathroom. Certainly provide praise and an additional incentive for toilet eliminations. You would use the nighttime accident data sheet to record an elimination

that occurred independently.

4. Develop a star chart for “accident free” nights.

For each night your child is accident free, and eliminates at least one time during the night, he or she should receive a star. You can use the star chart to provide a reward contingent upon earning a designated number of stars, for example, six stars earns a preferred video rental.

5. Once your child has been successful, you can remove the checkpoints.

Depending on your child’s age, at a point where she is accident free for several nights, you can remove the checkpoints and just allow her to wake up on her own. Continue using the star chart. If accidents become prevalent for several days in a row, go back to step #4 above.

Nighttime Accidents Star Chart:

If child did not have an accident that night, place a star the following morning on that date

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date: