

The Two Common Approaches To Dealing With Sleep Associations

Graduated Extinction involves putting the child to bed at a set bedtime and then having the parent check-in on the child (without intervention) on a schedule with gradually increasing intervals till the child falls asleep on his/her own.

Bedtime Fading involves deciding at what time the child is tending to fall asleep (which will likely be quite late initially), and putting the child to bed at that time. If the child does not fall asleep within 10-15 minutes, the child is taken back out of bed and a parent stays up with the child for one full hour. Then the child is put to bed again and gotten up if he/she does not fall asleep with in 10-15 minutes for another full hour. This process is repeated until the child falls asleep during the 10-15 minutes in bed. Initially, this may be quite late into the night. Once the child is falling asleep consistently after 10-15 minutes, the family gradually moves the bedtime up to a more reasonable set bedtime.

Comparison of Graduated Extinction and Bedtime Fading [\[1\]](#)

Graduated Extinction		Faded Bedtime	
<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>	<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>
Can be used at the regular bedtime rather than having to wait until late at night.	Requires parent to listen to the child's cries which can be difficult for many parents	Often can be "errorless" for parents to do since it does not require them to overcome their desire to respond to cries or behaviors and is less likely to lead to an escalation of problem behaviors	Requires that someone remain up late at night during the training
Parent is allowed to check on the child for reassurance.	Can result in an increase in behavior problems initially.	May avoid long bouts of crying	Can take several weeks before the desired bedtime is reached.
Usually effective within the first week.	Some self-injurious or destructive behaviors cannot be ignored.		

[\[1\]](#) Adapted from: Sleep Better!: A Guide to Improving Sleep for Children with Special Needs. VM Durand 1998 Paul H Brookes Baltimore Maryland. ISBN: 1557663157