

Development

Getting Your Tween Out of Bed

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Gone are the days when your toddler woke you before the crack of dawn. Now it takes all your morning energy just to get your child out of bed.

"Preteens' sleep patterns are different from those of adults and young children. Their body's internal clock actually tells them to fall asleep and wake up later," says Howard Spivak, M.D., professor of pediatrics and community health at the Tufts University School of Medicine, in Boston.

But they still have to be at school on time, so to make morning wake-ups less of a struggle:

Turn down the music. Instead of having the alarm clock blare, set it to play some quiet music about 15 minutes before your child has to get up. It'll help him ease into the day.

Give him a good reason to get up. This might mean making a special breakfast or carpooling with a close friend.

Make it his responsibility. Explain that you've realized he's old enough to get up on his own, so you'll only call for him once. Then stick to it -- many kids will embrace the autonomy. The rest will quickly learn what happens at school when they're not there on time!