

Sleep Problems? Your Child Has The Answer

By Ruth Mason, Parent Center Director

When our son, Yosef, was four, we were having a very hard time getting him to sleep at night. He would get out of bed repeatedly with numerous requests or demand that one of us stay with him until he fell asleep -- which would usually take an hour or two. After several months of dedicating my entire evening to putting this child to sleep, I decided to try problem-solving -- one of the many fine ideas in [*How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk*](#) by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. This wonderful, useful book is a popularization of the ideas of the well-known child psychologist Haim Ginott.

Problem-solving works because it involves your child in the process. Here's how to go about it.

1. Tell your child that you see a problem and would like to solve it together. State your feelings about the problem and let her state hers. Don't judge, contradict or argue. Just listen. You might want to create a pleasant atmosphere for this process by, say, putting a snack out on the table. Make sure there are no interruptions.
2. Get a piece of paper and a pen and tell your child that the two of you are going to brainstorm ideas for solving the problem. Again, all ideas are fine. Write down each one -- no matter how far out or how much you disagree with it -- without comment. Young children especially, are impressed when you write down their ideas.
3. Read the list out loud and together choose a solution that is acceptable to both of you.

What Yosef and I ended up agreeing on was that in addition to having a book read to him before bed, he would get an extra book and five minutes of company. And it worked! Bedtime was much smoother after we

had worked together to solve the problem. Although he is much older now and reads to himself before sleep, Yosef still asks for his "five minutes." A solution found by a four-year-old has turned into a ritual that has lasted for years and has been adopted by our other children as well.

The above article comes from a website titled www.wholefamily.com. Once you access this site's homepage you are able to narrow down your selection or search. I chose "Parent Center" where I found the above information. I recommend this site for information and answers to problems you are currently dealing with at home and/or school. The provided solutions may not solve your issues but they do "get the wheels turning" and serve as a starting point. Remember that I am also available to listen, to consult, to suggest, and to refer.