

The Sleep Fairy

Children rarely want to go to bed, preferring instead to stay up and play or simply spend time with parents. The result can be bedtime protests, stalling, or “curtain calls” (getting out of bed over and over to ask for something). The Sleep Fairy is one way to encourage your child to stay in bed and fall asleep with minimal protests. The following provides guidance on how to use the Sleep Fairy with your child.

1. **Your child should be told that there is a Sleep Fairy who will come to visit her if she goes to bed when asked and falls asleep, leaving a small prize under her pillow.** Depending on the age of the child, prizes can include stickers, a penny, a small toy from the dollar store, or a couple of favorite treats (chocolate chips) in a bag.
2. **Following a consistent bedtime routine and bedtime, your child should be placed in bed.** She should be reminded that the Sleep Fairy will come to visit after she is asleep. Every night for 2 weeks, you should place a small prize under your child’s pillow after she is asleep.
3. **After those initial 2 weeks, your child should be told that you don’t know when the Sleep Fairy is going to come now because she has a lot of houses to visit.** You can leave a prize every second or third day initially and then on other random days to keep your child guessing.

Children who are old enough to understand the Tooth Fairy often respond quickly to the Sleep Fairy, who rewards them for falling asleep. By receiving a prize every night for 2 weeks, your child learns to fall asleep at bedtime with fewer protests. After that, the use of a more irregular rewards schedule will help keep your child going to bed and falling asleep, as she is unsure if this is one of the nights the Sleep Fairy will come to visit.
