

## CHAPTER 5

# Waking Up and Going to Sleep

Waking up and going to sleep happens every day, and for most toddlers, at least twice a day, giving you lots of opportunities to do some of these activities. It can also be a very cuddly time, both when they are waking up and as they are winding down and preparing for a nap or bedtime. **But**—children can also be quite cranky during these times, so be sure to tailor the stimulation you provide and the behavior you’re trying to elicit to the child’s mood. Keep the stimulation quiet and soothing and keep your demands very simple.



### 1. GOOD MORNING, ELMO!

#### LANGUAGE

Morning or nap wake-up time can be a great time to get in lots of repetitive language practice. When you lift your child out of his crib or bed, carry him around the room, stopping to greet some of his favorite stuffed animals, dolls, action figures, or pictures of family members and say good morning to each of them. For example, you could say, “Good morning, Elmo, good morning, Teddy, good morning, Doggie, good morning, Grandma [if you have a picture of her], good morning, Grandpa,” and so on. If you do this every morning or nap wake-up time, and your child becomes familiar with this routine, you can try to use the filling-in procedure (see Chapter 3) to see if you can get your child to begin trying to say the names himself. For example, walk up to the picture of Grandma and say, “Good morning, \_\_\_\_\_,” and then pause and look at him with an expectant look and see if he says “Grandma” or even makes the “g” sound. If he does, cheer for him and give him a big squeeze or whatever demonstration of affection he likes best. If he doesn’t fill in the word, you can try prompting by saying, “Good morning [pause for

a second or two], Gra . . . ,” and see if he completes the word. If he does, give him enthusiastic praise, a squeeze or tickle, or whatever you think he might like. If you think “Granny” or “Grandma” is too hard, think up another word for Grandma using sounds you know he can make, like “Gaga” or “Buhbuh” or “Ganny.” If you think there’s another word he might be ready to say, like “doggy” or “teddy,” try that one instead. If he is not ready to fill in with words or sounds, that’s okay. It’s important just to keep letting him hear these words, so continue doing the greeting routine and exposing him to this language.

### *One Note about Waking Up*

Some children are very groggy and sleepy for a few minutes after waking up, and it takes them a little while to be really awake. If your child is hungry, give him some milk or juice from his bottle or cup so he will not be too uncomfortable to pay attention. If he’s cranky, try to soothe him and let him settle down. You can carry him around the room and do your greeting routine, but don’t expect him to try to talk until he is really awake. The exact routine will depend on your child’s habits, but you might try something like this: lift him out of the crib, sit with him on your lap for a couple of minutes while he’s waking up, give him a small bottle or cup of milk if he’s hungry, *then* walk around and do the greeting routines; once with *you* doing all the talking, and then a second time when he’s more awake, leaving off names for *him* to fill in.



## 2. NIGHT-NIGHT, DADDY!

### LANGUAGE/SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Nighttime (or going down for a nap) is also a great time to get in more repetitive language practice and to become more aware of each important person in the house. The goal is to have your child give good night kisses or hugs to any of her family members and favorite dolls or stuffed animals and to practice hearing, and maybe saying, their names, before she goes to bed. Make up a routine for saying good night at bedtime similar to the one you use for morning greetings. For example, you could carry her around to each family member, saying, “Kiss Daddy. Night-night, Daddy. Kiss brother. Night-night, brother.” (Of course, in this case, you would use the brother’s name.) If you think your child is ready, try using the filling-in procedure to see if she will fill in with a name.

When you say, “Kiss Daddy,” you can lean her in so that she’s close enough to give Daddy a kiss, and Daddy should give her a comfortable hug and kiss. Prompting a kiss can be difficult, but Daddy’s kiss will serve as a model, and you can gently prompt her to give Daddy a hug by raising her arms and putting them around him. When you carry her to her bed for bedtime or nap, continue the routine by carrying her around her bedroom and saying good night (or “night-night”) to dolls, stuffed animals, or pictures. Walk around the room and stop in front of your child’s favorite stuffed animals to give *them* good night kisses and hugs and say, “Night-night, teddy bear.” And she can collect a few stuffed animals along the way to take with

her into the bed. If your child is cranky or fussy because she's very tired, keep the routine short and try to soothe her with whatever works for her—singing a favorite song, nursery rhymes, cuddling, reading a favorite book, lying in bed with her favorite stuffed animal while you read or sing to her.



### 3. UP, UP, AND AWAY!

LANGUAGE/NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION/  
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT/EYE CONTACT

Waking in the morning or after a nap is also a great time to get in some practice with the word “up.” When you walk in and see your child standing in his crib, give him a warm, delighted smile to show him how happy you are to see him. Then reach out your arms and say, “Up?!” in a happy, *questioning* or rising tone of voice. If he doesn't raise his arms, then use a gentle physical prompt to raise his arms in a gesture that means “Pick me up” or “I want up.” Then immediately pick him up and give him a warm hug and a nice cuddle. Picking him up is a natural reinforcer because you are providing just what he is asking for. Make sure you have his eye contact just before you lift him out of the crib, even if it's very brief. To get eye contact, put yourself right in front of him where it's easy for him to look at you. If he doesn't look at you, put yourself right where he's looking, just before you pick him up. Do this often when he wakes in the morning as well as when he wakes from his nap. Before long, he should be raising his arms on his own and looking right at you when he wants to get out of his crib.

You can also use this idea during any part of the day when you have a spare minute. Suppose your child *loves* when you pick him up and swing him around. To teach him to understand the word “up” you can say, “Up?!” in a happy, questioning tone of voice and then immediately use a physical prompt to raise his arms in a gesture that means “Pick me up” or “I want up.” Then immediately pick him up and swing him around, reinforcing his request to be picked up (even if he needed a prompt to do it). Repeat this several times in a row. Then on the third or fourth try, say, “Up?!” just as you did before. But this time, don't use a physical prompt to raise his arms. Instead, just wait for a moment and look expectantly at your child. If he raises his arms at all, even only slightly, pick him right up and swing him around again, saying something like, “Up, up, and AWAY!!!” In this way his “up” gesture becomes the “on switch” for the fun. If he doesn't raise his arms, just prompt him again by gently helping him raise his arms and then continue as before for a few more tries. You can try fading your prompt gradually too. For example, you can try to prompt him by reaching down to him as if you are about to pick him up and seeing if he raises his arms. If he does, great! Pick him up immediately and swing him around if he likes that. If not, go back again to a physical prompt, delaying your prompts from time to time until you see that he is beginning to do it by himself. If you do this every day for even a few days, your child may soon learn to raise his arms when you say, “Up? Want *up*?” Or, “Do you want *up*?”

If he is able to imitate sounds or words, you can also try to work on having him say the word “up” just before you pick him up. Simply reach your arms toward your

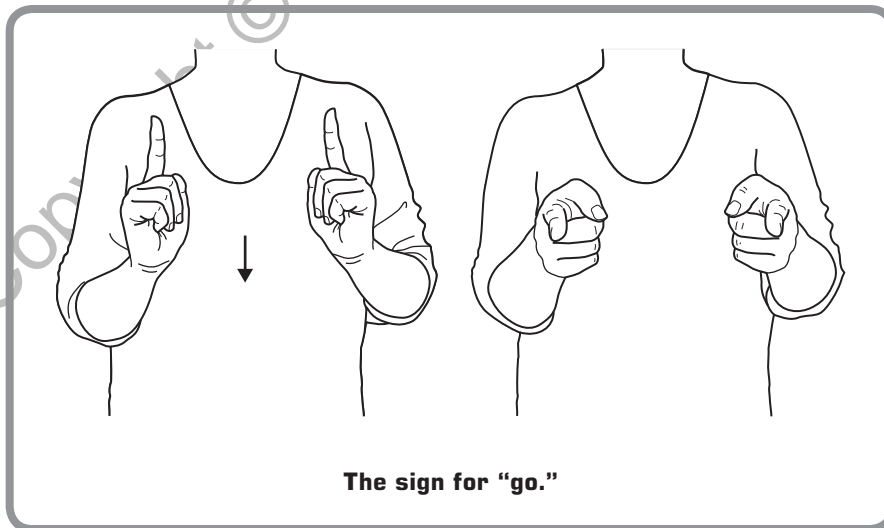
child as if you are about to pick him up and say, “Say up.” When you do this, it will be important to put the emphasis on the word “up” and to deemphasize the word “say.” Do this by saying “say” quickly and softly, pausing briefly, and then opening your mouth wide and saying the word “up” more slowly, using a clear, slightly louder tone of voice. Make sure there is a noticeable difference in volume between the very soft “say” and the very clear “up.” This should help to increase the likelihood that your child will understand that when you ask him to “say” something, you want him to repeat only the word or words that come *after* the word “say.”



#### 4. THE BLANKET GAME

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT/LANGUAGE

Another activity that many children enjoy a great deal is being taken for a ride on a blanket. You can make a game of it by taking a blanket to your child, having her sit on it on the floor, and pulling the blanket, and her with it, around the room. Do it slowly so she doesn't fall off; speed up a bit if she likes it, but try to go at the speed she likes. Stop periodically and prompt her to say “go.” You can do this in several ways—by saying, “Go?” or by prompting her with the initial sound “g” or by saying, “Ready, set, go,” before you start pulling, eventually using the filling-in procedure to see if she will fill in the word “go.” Once she becomes familiar with the “Ready, set, go” routine, simply prompt by saying, “Ready . . . Set . . .,” then pause and see if she fills in with “Go!” If she doesn't yet say any words, you can prompt her to make a sign for go before pulling her some more. See if your child can imitate you making the sign for “go” shown below—you hold both of your index fingers straight up and then move them downward as if pointing with two hands in the forward direction.



If your child has difficulty making this sign, you can make up your own sign for “go,” such as a one-handed point or a fist held up over the head. Anything will do! In any case, as soon as your child attempts to communicate the word “go,” you should immediately take her on a little ride, then stop again and say, “Ready, set, . . .” or “Ready, set, g . . .” and see if she will make the sign or fill in “go” or “g” another time. If she does, be very excited and say something like, “Go! You said go!” as you pull her. If she doesn’t say “Go,” just pause for a couple of seconds and fill it in yourself—“Go!”—and then pull her. If you do this at bedtime, you’ll want to do a couple of relaxing, calming routines, like reading a book or singing some songs, so that she isn’t *too* excited when it’s time for her to go to sleep.



### 5. LET’S GO FAST. LET’S GO SLOW.

#### LANGUAGE/NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Once your child starts saying “g” or “go,” you can add the words “fast” and “slow.” Pull him around several times very slowly, saying, “Slow . . . slow,” and be sure to draw out the word “sloooow,” saying it slowly and calmly, then speed up the blanket ride as you say “Now we go FAST!” (only as fast as he enjoys), saying “fast!” quickly in an excited voice. Making your voice sound different when you say the two words heightens the contrast between the two concepts. You can use the filling-in procedure by saying, “Now we go slow,” and then speed up and say, “Now we go . . .,” and see if he will attempt to say “fast.” You can also ask him to make a choice by saying, “Do you want fast or slow?” If he doesn’t yet say words, you can ask, “Do you want fast?” and if he looks at you, or wiggles, or nods, or in some way indicates that that is what he wants, say, “Okay, FAST!” and pull him quickly. Again, going fast is a natural reinforcer because you’re providing just what he’s asking for. This can be done with other activities as well. For example, when taking a walk, you might hold hands and say “fast” and begin to run fast, and then say “slow” and begin to walk slowly. Or when giving your child a stroller ride or a piggyback ride, you might try the same thing, saying “slow” and walking or pushing slowly and then saying “fast!” and walking or pushing fast.



### 6. LIGHTS OUT!

#### LANGUAGE

You can work on the concept of light and dark, as well as the names of different rooms, by walking around the house and turning out the lights in various rooms together just before bedtime. As you enter a room with your child, turn on the light if it’s not already on and say, “Now it’s light.” Then as you leave the room, turn off the light and say, “Now it’s dark—good night, kitchen.” You can do the same thing in any room. For example, “Now it’s dark—good night, bathroom,” or “Now it’s dark—good night, living room,” and so on. And, of course, as your child becomes more and more familiar with this nighttime routine, you can pause at various points and see if she fills in the blanks. If she does, with the correct word or some attempt

at the word, be very enthusiastic. You might say, “Kitchen! That’s right! It’s the kitchen. Good night, kitchen.” If you think your child is ready to start saying these words but is not saying them yet, you can prompt her; for example, “Good night, ki . . .” If she doesn’t respond correctly, you complete the word for her: “Good night, kitchen.” If she does, of course, praise her enthusiastically and give her a little squeeze or a tickle or whatever you think she might enjoy.



## 7. BEDTIME STORIES

### LANGUAGE/SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Reading bedtime stories each night is a wonderful routine for any child. Most books work well as naptime stories too. There are so many positive aspects to this routine, but most of all, if the child enjoys this time with you, when you are snuggled up together reading his favorite stories, it will help him look forward to bedtime or naptime, rather than try to delay them. And he will be able to go to sleep feeling calm and safe.

For children who have difficulty learning language, it’s a good idea to choose books that use a repetitive language approach to teaching new words. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin, Jr., and Eric Carle and *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown are two classic repetitive language books, but there are many others, like counting or alphabet books or books by Sandra Boynton. If you read the same three or four books to your child over and over again, and your child enjoys them, you can try pointing to a picture and pausing before you say the word to see if he’ll fill in the blank with the missing word. If you think he might be able to say the word but needs a little help, you can try prompting him with the first sound of the word, like “Good night, mmm . . .” or “Brown b . . .” Let him see your face while you’re making these sounds, too, especially if he can imitate movements.

After you read *Goodnight Moon*, you could keep it going for a minute or two and make it even more fun by holding a flashlight, turning out some of the lights, and shining the flashlight on different parts of the room while saying things like, “Good night, crib; good night, books.” Your child may really enjoy being the one to shine the flashlight beam on things he wants to say good night to, or to shine the flashlight on something and have you say good night to the object.

Before you begin reading, try holding up two different books to see if your child will reach for one. Then reinforce by saying, “Oh! You want *Goodnight Moon*! Great!” For the child 9 months and older, you might gently try to shape her fingers into a point as she reaches for her preferred book.



## 8. HOMEMADE BOOKS

### LANGUAGE

If your child likes books, try making your own books, designed especially for her. You can create books to help her learn about herself and her world. There are many, many possibilities. Here are a few examples using the repetitive language approach that we’ve been talking about.

### *Names of Foods*

If you want to teach your child the names of her favorite foods, you could take pictures of those foods (or download and print images, or even make colored drawings) and make a book called *What Does Baby Eat?* Every other page would be a picture of your child with the words “What does baby eat?” Of course, you would substitute your child’s name for the word “baby.” Then on the opposite page would be a picture of one of her favorite foods, with the words “Baby eats” and then the word for the food pictured on that page. So, for example, if your child’s name is Maggie, the book might read, “What does Maggie eat? Maggie eats bananas.” “What does Maggie eat? Maggie eats yogurt.” “What does Maggie eat? Maggie eats cereal.” “What does Maggie eat? Maggie eats ice cream.” “Yum!” All you need to do is take a few 8" × 11" sheets of white paper, fold them in half, turn them sideways, and there’s your book!

This book would provide a great opportunity to work on the names of foods, as well as the word “eat” and the child’s name. Once your child becomes familiar with the book, you could try pausing at various points to see if she fills in the blanks with some of these words. Prompt her with the first sound of the word while you point to the picture; if she doesn’t try to say the word, finish it for her. If she does try, be very enthusiastic, even if her try isn’t very good. For example, if you say, “What does Maggie eat? Maggie eats . . .” (pause and point to banana) and she says, “ba” or “na,” say, “That’s right! Maggie eats BANANA!” You are demonstrating the correct way to say the word, but, more important, you are reinforcing with enthusiasm her attempt to say the word.

### *Names of Clothing*

You could also make a book called *What Does Baby Wear?* to help her learn the words for clothing. That book could have pictures of her in her pajamas, swimsuit, coat, and so on, or just pictures of the clothes themselves if that’s easier. Read it the same way, pausing occasionally to see if she will attempt to say the word.

### *Names of Family Members*

And you could make a book called *Who Loves Baby?* to help her learn the names of her family members. One page would say “Who loves baby?” and the opposite page would have a picture of Grandma and the words “Grandma loves baby!”

### *Action Words*

If you want to begin teaching your child some action words, you could make a *What Does Baby Do?* book that could have pictures of her eating, drinking, sliding, swinging, sleeping, bathing, reading, and so on.

### Information about Your Child

You could even make an *All about Baby* book that could have basic information about your child, like her name, her age, the people in her family, and the things she loves. The possibilities are endless.

If your child does not like books, try first introducing interactive books (you'll probably have to buy these!) that have flaps, pop-ups, or sound buttons. If there are characters she likes or things she is fascinated with, like fish or trains or Elmo, try books about those things. You can buy these or make your own with pictures from magazines or that you download from the Internet.

In any case, keep the bedtime books happy and light. You always want your child to go to sleep thinking happy thoughts!



## 9. REMEMBERING THE DAY: HAPPY MEMORIES

LANGUAGE/THINKING

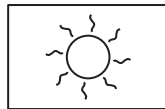
As you sit with your child at bedtime, remind him of the most special parts of his day: “You saw your friend today” or “You went down a big slide today” or “Grandma and Grandpa came to visit you today.” If you have a cell phone that takes pictures, and can take a few pictures each day, show them to your child at bedtime to help him remember the happy things about his day. And be sure to remind your child that he felt *happy* to spend time with Grandma and Grandpa and that they were *happy* to spend time with him! If you can get a picture of the child smiling or laughing, or one of the adults or other children smiling or laughing, be sure to show this to your child and say, “Grandma’s happy!” Keep it simple—don’t remind him of more than about three things. When it’s bedtime or even naptime, the morning activity might be only a distant memory to your child!



## 10. LULLABY AND GOOD NIGHT

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT/  
NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Just before it’s finally time for your child to go to sleep, sing her a lullaby. Music is very soothing for bedtime, especially if you sing the same set of songs every night. You might even make three pictures to go with three different lullabies; for example, you could make a star for “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star,” a cradle for “Rock-a-Bye



**Lullaby pictures.**



Baby,” and a sun for “You Are My Sunshine.” Point to the picture that goes with the song you’re about to sing. Then you can ask the child to request a song by putting all three pictures on his crib or bed and help him point to the picture of the song he wants or hand you the picture and then sing the song he requested. If he points to a picture but then doesn’t like the song you start, put the picture back on the bed, help him point to a different one, and try singing it. Once he learns which picture stands for which song, always sing the one he requests, even if you’re getting very tired of it! The idea is to teach him to request what he wants, and you reward that behavior by giving him what he has requested.

Copyright © 2016 The Guilford Press