



Debate Corner This Week's Motion...

Children should be allowed to choose their own bedtime

BY BEATRICE NAKIBUUKA

You may think the holiday is a time to catch up on their favourite TV programme or cartoon until late in the night. But your parents order you to go to bed. Wouldn't it better for them to let you choose your sleep time? Let us debate...

Affirmative side

- Choosing your bedtime teaches independence. When children decide what time to sleep, they learn to listen to their bodies and make responsible decisions. This helps us grow into confident teenagers who know how to manage ourselves without being commanded all the time.
- Secondly, every child is different. Some fall asleep earlier, while others study better at night. Allowing children to choose their bedtime gives them a chance to follow their natural rhythm.
- Thirdly, choosing our own bedtime helps us learn time management. If I know I have to wake up at 6am, I will calculate how much sleep I need and plan accordingly. This teaches responsibility because we learn

to balance schoolwork, rest, and family time without always being directed by adults.

- Lastly, giving children some freedom builds trust between parents and children. When a parent allows their child to choose their bedtime, the child feels respected and valued. This improves communication and reduces unnecessary arguments in the home.

Negative side

- Children may make poor

decisions. At our age, we like watching cartoons, TikTok videos, or playing games. If we choose our own bedtime, many of us will sleep very late, and this will affect our health and school performance.

- Secondly, a regular bedtime is important for good health. Doctors say that children need about 8-10 hours of sleep to grow well and stay alert. If children sleep late, they wake up tired, cannot concentrate in class, and may even become

irritable or sick. Parents set bedtimes to protect our health, not to punish us.

- My third point is that choosing our own bedtime can cause chaos in the home. Imagine a family where one child sleeps at 7pm, another at 10pm, and another is still awake at midnight. The house will be noisy, lights will stay on, and parents will struggle to monitor everyone. A fixed bedtime helps keep order in the home.
- Lastly, if children sleep late, they might miss important morning activities. Many Ugandan pupils wake up early for school, prep, or chores. Without proper bedtime control, children may oversleep and start missing lessons, arriving late, or performing poorly.

Rebuttal

The opposing side says children will make poor choices and sleep late, but that is not always true. Children can be guided to make responsible decisions.

Allowing us to choose bedtime does not mean sleeping at midnight. It simply means giving us some freedom within reasonable limits.

Finally, they suggest that choosing our own bedtime will make us late for school.

But learning from consequences is part of growing up. If we manage our sleep responsibly, we will still wake up on time. This teaches us accountability.



Experiment