

Big Kid

Sleepover: When Is My Child Old Enough?

Posted by [Jeanne Sager](#) on May 14, 2010 at 11:45 AM

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Flickr photo by [Jolante](#)

My daughter had her first sleepover a few months ago -- her 5-year-old cousin slept over at our house for an evening.

He's young, but we're family, and the kids are great friends despite a four-hour distance between houses that makes it hard for them to spend much time together.

But with elementary school facing us this coming fall, I've been wondering how long it'll be until I'm the one saying bye-bye at night... and letting my daughter sleep at someone else's house.

How old, I wondered, is *old enough* for a sleepover?

Kids should be potty-trained and be able to sleep through the night before they're sent off to their BFF's house, says Dr. Charlotte Reznick, an associate professor of psychology at UCLA and author of *The Power of Your Child's Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety Into Joy and Success*.

She suggests kids be in elementary school before you give the OK.

"It's really about the willingness of the child," advises Dr. Reznick. "If she doesn't want to do it, you have to look at the circumstances. Is it because she's 6 and she's still too young, or is it because she's 12 and just timid?"

A few more tips:

- Six is the early range for sleepovers, but don't be surprised if your child isn't ready until 8 or 9.
- If they're 12 and still uncomfortable, then it's something that needs to be addressed. Talk to your child about why they're afraid and consult your pediatrician.

Seven seems to be the common age [among the CafeMoms](#) -- what's the youngest you'd let your kids sleep over at someone else's home?

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The Buzz in Comments

- My son is 21 months and STILL clingy. He will only go to me, dh, or his parents.
- He's still a baby. A change in a routine can make a child clingy; especially when the...
- I'm not sure how I feel about raw milk, personally, but I agree that the government needs to bac...
- Very happy to have a health plan that would allow me to make this kind of decision for

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