

LITTLE GIRL 'OUTFOXES' PARENTS IN BEDTIME NEGOTIATION

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(ABC NEWS)- She may be only 7 years old, but Evelyn Underwood is already an expert negotiator.

Whining, it seems, does not work in the Underwood's Vacaville, California, house. "Even if what they want or need is reasonable the way they express those wants and needs is just as important, if not more so," Tyler Underwood, Evelyn's father, told ABC News.

So when Evelyn's pleas for a later bedtime didn't work, she decided to appeal to her parents in writing.

"Evelyn has been asking for a later bedtime for months," Underwood said. "Mary and I finally shut down the conversation when she could not give us a good reason why we should extend it. After putting our foot down ... and telling her she will be sent to bed early the next time she asks, I guess she decided to work around the system."

Last week, Evelyn handed her mom the letter in a sealed envelope.



Her father said his daughter told her mother, "if we wanted to 'discuss the contents of this letter' that she would be available anytime."

The letter read, in part:

"I am almost 8 and Oll has the eggzact bedtime as me and why not?"

The parents had a good laugh, but decided not to bring it up with Evelyn. She didn't mention it either, her dad said.

Eventually though, the couple "decided that type of cleverness and assertive behavior should be rewarded, and we opened the door to negotiations."

It worked. Evelyn's bedtime was extended from 8 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., but that time must be spent reading in bed. Her parents added another caveat: if she's late getting ready for school in the mornings, bedtime goes back to 8.

"This isn't the first time she has outfoxed us," Tyler Underwood said. "When she was 3 we told her that if she wouldn't eat her veggies with dinner than she could be done and go to bed for the rest of the night. She would calmly get up, change into pajamas, brush her teeth, and climb into bed 3 hours early and stare at the ceiling until it got dark and only then fall asleep. It's hard to be upset at that type of conviction."