Time for Bed

Written by Ann Gianola
Illustrated by Mark Neyndorff
It’s 8:45 P.M. and Robert’s father opens Robert’s bedroom door. He says, “Bedtime is in fifteen minutes. Brush your teeth and be ready for bed at 9:00.”
Robert’s father returns at 9:00. Robert is still playing in his bedroom. His father says, “Turn off the lights, Robert. It’s time for bed.”

“May I please stay up a little while longer, Dad? I’m not tired yet.”

“No,” says Robert’s father. “Your bedtime is 9:00. You need to wake up early for school tomorrow.”

“But,” cries Robert, “that isn’t fair!”

“What isn’t fair?” asks Robert’s father. “It isn’t fair that I have to go to bed so early.”

“It isn’t early. All ten-year-olds go to bed at this time.”
“Not all of them. My friend Richard doesn’t have a bedtime. He can go to bed whenever he wants to. Sometimes he never goes to bed. He stays up all night long.”

“Oh, really?”

“Believe me, Dad. It’s true. Richard’s family doesn’t have rules about going to bed. They don’t have rules at all! Richard can do anything he wants to do. He brings candy and soda for lunch. Richard also wears T-shirts and jeans to school.”
“Well,” says Robert’s father, “that is Richard’s family. This is our family. You are a part of this family. Now it is 9:10. It’s ten minutes past your bedtime. Please go to bed now!”
The next morning Robert and his father sit down to eat breakfast. “I’m sorry about getting angry last night,” says his father.

“Me too,” says Robert. “But I don’t like being the only kid with babyish rules to follow.”
“Let me explain why we have rules in our family,” says Robert’s father. “I want you to get enough sleep so that you can pay attention in school and be a good student. I want you to eat good food so your body stays healthy. Children are not supposed to wear T-shirts and jeans at your school. We follow the rules. We are trying to do the right thing, Robert. Does that sound fair?”
“Yes, Dad. I guess so,” says Robert. “But when I’m your age, I’m staying up until 10:00.”

“That sounds very fair to me!” laughs Robert’s father.