Name _____

Are night lights bad for you?

Have you ever heard someone say, "Don't read in dim light! It's bad for your eyes!" For a long time, many people thought that spending a lot of time in dim light was bad for your eyes. They thought it would make you NEARSIGHTED. Even many scientists thought this.

A person who is NEARSIGHTED has a hard time seeing things that are far away. For example, they might struggle to see writing on the board from the back of the classroom. Street signs down the road might look blurry.

One reason people thought this was because of a scientific study. In this study, scientists found that children who slept with night lights were much more likely to grow up nearsighted. That sounds like bad news, right?

But as scientists did MORE research into this topic, they discovered a surprising explanation. We've known for a long time that parents who are nearsighted are much more likely to have children who are nearsighted, too. And, it turns out, nearsighted parents are also more likely to buy night lights than other parents are. Night light helps nearsighted parents see if they have to get up in the middle of the night, maybe without their glasses.

So, sleeping with a night light DOESN'T make kids nearsighted. Nearsighted parents are more likely to have nearsighted kids, and those nearsighted parents are also more likely to buy night lights for their kids.

Now, there may be other reasons not to sleep with a night light. You might find for example, that a night light makes it hard for you to fall asleep, or sleep well. But you don't have to worry about a night light hurting your eyes!