

SLEEP ENVIRONMENT (Module 3)

Lesson 6: Bed Transitions

Lesson 6.1 - Swaddled → No swaddle

If your baby is already 4 months old, has never been swaddled before or has already been weaned from the swaddle, we do not recommend that you start swaddling them with a tight swaddle at this point. However, if you want to work with the Shhh-Pat Method (see Module 7) or feel that your little one is waking themselves up with their hands a lot, you may want to use something like the stretchy Cocoon Swaddle Bag from Ergopouch temporarily as it allows for some movement, but keeps baby's hands out of their face. Plus, this swaddle is an easy one to wean, with the snap buttons on the sides allowing for one-arm-out/one-arm-in during the transition.

If you notice that your baby is about to be able to roll while swaddled, or has done so already, wean from the swaddle IMMEDIATELY - this is a suffocation hazard! Your baby will most likely roll from back to front while unswaddled first - this doesn't necessarily mean that they can actually roll when swaddled. However, after your baby starts to roll unswaddled while awake it is crucial that you observe your baby more closely. If you notice your baby attempting to roll while swaddled, remove the swaddle immediately, as this is a suffocation hazard.

Your baby should be fully weaned from the swaddle by 6 months of age, otherwise this can negatively impact their motoric development.

If you think your baby is ready to transition out of the swaddle (usually between 3-5 months of age), try the following method, before you start your sleep training process:

- ★ Try one arm out for a nap for 2-3 days before going to 2 arms out. After your baby has had both arms out for one nap successfully for 2-3 days, unswaddle them for all naps. You can wait another 2-3 days before unswaddling for night

time or if things have been going very well with the naps, then just switch from swaddle to sleep sack for all sleep times.

Keep in mind, even if your baby has been successfully weaned from the swaddle for most of the night, it might still be helpful for you to swaddle your baby for the second part of the night (for example between 3-7am, after a 3am feed). This is the lightest sleep of the night, and babies are often more restless at this time. Of course, we only recommend this if rolling while swaddled has not become an issue yet, and your little one is younger than 6 months old.

Remember that every transition can cause a bit of a regression in sleep, so be patient as your little one gets used to sleeping with their arms out. If you try arms-out, but sleep deteriorates, and there's no immediate need to unswaddle, we suggest you re-swaddle and try again in a few weeks.

Lesson 6.2 - Co-sleeping/Side-bassinet → Crib

If your child has been sleeping in a side-bassinet or co-sleeping, you may want to consider transitioning your child to their own crib if...

- your child is getting too big for the side-bassinet
- your child is becoming mobile and it's dangerous to leave them to sleep alone
- you notice that your presence next to your child is disturbing your little one's sleep (ie. they wake up whenever you come into the room, you notice that your child is disturbed by your noises in the night, or your child wakes frequent in the night for your assistance to fall back to sleep AND/OR to check that you are still there)

To start this transition, put your little one's new crib right next to your bed, with all 4 sides up, and then gradually move it slightly further away over a couple of weeks. Try to time your bedtime with the time of the first feed, or when your child first stirs, so that you are not disrupting their deep sleep cycles at the beginning of the night. White noise

may also be helpful to make sure that your movements and noises are not disturbing your little one's sleep. You can do this transition in conjunction with starting to implement your chosen settling method during the sleep training process (see modules 7 and 8).

Disclaimer: *If your child is still waking frequently in the night after 2 weeks, consider moving your child into a separate room OR moving to a separate room yourself. In tight quarters, this may mean parents sleeping on the couch for a few weeks until sleep stabilizes.*

Lesson 6.3 - Crib in parents room / co-sleeping → crib in own room

We generally recommend moving your child into their own bedroom once they are 1 year or over, OR earlier if...

- you notice that their sleep is being disturbed by you going to bed in the evening
- your little one wakes frequently in the night, has a hard time re-settling and night sleep has not improved after 1 week of sleep training
- you or your partner's sleep is disturbed by your child's noises in the night

Often, parents whose babies are struggling with frequent night waking want to wait with this transition until their child is sleeping better, because attending to the child's wake-ups feels easier when they are in the same room. Usually what we see in coaching, though, is that the child's sleep won't improve until they are sleeping in their own room, because parental presence is one of the sleep associations maintaining the frequent night waking.

Here are two methods to approach this transition:

1. For a gradual approach, put a mattress for yourself on the floor next to your child's crib in their new room for the first week, so that you can ease them into the new environment. Then, gradually move yourself further away until you are

out of the room. This is best combined with the GRADUAL RETREAT METHOD (see module 7) as part of the sleep training process.

2. For a quicker transition, move your child's bed to the new room, and then combine with the Intervalled Soothing Method (see module 7) as part of your sleep training process.

OPTIONAL: You can start with your child only taking naps in the new bedroom for the first few days before you start the sleep training process, while keeping them in your room for night sleep. After you start sleep training, move on to one of the above methods to completely transition your little one to sleeping in their own room.

***Disclaimer:** If you're transitioning your child from co-sleeping to a crib in their own room, this process may cause more tears and frustration from your little one, and also trigger an emotional response in you. This is normal! So give your child (and yourself!) a little more time to make this transition, and consider the more gradual approach mentioned above.*

Lesson 6.4 - Crib in own room / co-sleeping / crib in parent's room → big bed in own room

In general, we do not recommend making this transition before 2.5 years of age.

This is because toddlers don't have the necessary impulse control to choose to stay in bed. If you move them to a big bed too early, they may start to get out of bed frequently and struggle settling to sleep. Some parents choose to move their child to a big kid's bed between 18-24 months, often in an attempt to correct already existing sleep issues or because a new baby is on the way. However, this usually results in the sleep issues getting worse.

If you still choose to do this transition, you will need to be very consistent in setting boundaries around bedtime, and expect setbacks (also in the future when your child is going through sleep regressions). Sleep will most likely be slower to improve. You may need to treat your toddler's whole room as their "sleeping space". This means you need

to make sure the whole room is safe and sleep conducive, otherwise bedtime may mean play-time for your child.

During this transition, if your little one constantly gets out of bed, don't react and simply return them to their bed with minimal and neutral interaction. Both positive responses (giving multiple cups of water, endless cuddles, etc) and negative responses (raising your voice, giving threats, etc) will reinforce the behavior.

Top tips:

- If you've already made this change, and sleep has been continuously difficult, we would suggest going back to a crib for a few months, and then trying again.
- If your child can climb out of their crib and you are worried about their safety, try using a sleeping bag to limit your little one's mobility as a first step, before moving your child to a big bed.
- If you are expecting a new baby, but your toddler is happy in their crib, there is no need to rush this transition - simply get a second crib! Actually, having the familiarity and clear boundaries of the crib may give your toddler a sense of security and comfort as they adjust to a new sibling.