

Transitioning from Crib to Bed

For toddlers, making the move from their crib to a bed is a big step. For parents whose child is less than thrilled about going into or staying in his or her bed, it can become a challenge.

The key to success with this milestone is to be patient and allow the child time to adjust to the change.

Understand the Child's Perspective

Adults may not find the transition to be anything more than moving from one sleep location to another. For your child, however, the crib sleeping environment is all they have ever known. It has become a place of comfort.

Because children, especially toddlers, are creatures of habit, they tend to resist any change in their routines. In some way, the child will mourn the loss of his or her usual place of rest.

When to Transition

Between the ages of two and three, most children are ready for a bed. Parents should consider the transition when their child is 35 inches tall or able to stand up and climb out of the crib when the mattress is set at the lowest setting.

Also, if the child is able to put him- or herself back to sleep when waking at night, he or she will be a bit more confident when put to sleep in a bed.

Some parents decide to make the transition to a bed when expecting another child and knowing the crib will be needed. However, since the crib-to-bed change is momentous, psychologically pairing it with the arrival of a sibling can make a child feel displaced. Parents who wish to make this move should consider doing it early in the pregnancy. This allows the older child to adjust to his or her new bed before the baby arrives.

Additionally, if parents plan ahead and purchase a bunk bed, have the older child sleep on the bottom bunk until at least 6-years-old. This will help prevent falls and other safety concerns.

Types of Beds

There are a number of options parents can choose from when looking for a bed:

- Toddler
- Twin
- Double
- Bunk
- Trundle

In addition to price differences, parents should be sure it fits the space constraints and a child's temperament. However, whatever the decision, make sure the bed is safe. Be sure it is:

- Equipped with or allows side rails.
- Low enough to the ground to allow the child to get in and out on his or her own.
- Sturdy enough to hold up to rolling around and, inevitably, bouncing.
- Simply designed; keep away from sharp cutouts and short posts where clothing or bedding can get snagged and pose a strangulation hazard.
- Certified by the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA).
- Set up away from windows, blinds, drapery, radiators, lamps and shelving.

Tips to Help the Process

Take the toddler shopping when looking at mattresses. While he or she may not seem to be helpful in the process, toddlers will be vocal about their likes or dislikes and will say when a mattress is too hard or soft.

Once the mattress and bed are purchased and installed, it might become necessary to train the child to sleep there. Remember to keep bedtime routines the same -- the continuity will help with the transition. Consider these tips:

- Remove the crib from his or her room and put it somewhere it cannot be seen. Having it there as a reminder can make it harder to want to be in the new bed.
- If it is necessary to leave the crib in the same room, try a gradual approach to the bed. Allow the child to take naps on the new bed and do bedtime reading there. In time, he or she will become accustomed to the bed and will want to sleep there at night.
- Move all the familiar sleeping items such as blankets and stuffed animals to the new bed.
- Take the child shopping and allow him or her to choose a special new toy or other comfort items to make the bed more welcoming.

Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
- Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA): www.jpma.org

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: LivingME