The cot to bed transition



Moving your baby from a cot to a bed is a big milestone. When and how to do this varies depending on your baby and individual circumstances. Here's our guide to making the move.

When?

Our biggest advice is not to rush this move. For most toddlers it's somewhere between 2 and 3 years. The younger your baby is, the less likely they are to understand the concept of staying in bed – which could cause disturbed nights.

Most parents make the transition when their little one has either outgrown the cot, or has started to climb out of it. The most important thing to remember is safety first. If your little one is trying to climb out of their cot and in danger of falling then it's time to make the transition.

Another common reason to switch from a cot to a bed is when there's a new arrival on the way. There are two ways to approach this. You can either make the move from cot to bed before the new baby arrives, or afterwards. If you choose to do it before, try to leave around 6 weeks for your toddler to get used to being in their own bed. We usually recommend making the change before the new arrival, as having a new sibling can also cause some sleep disruption.

How?

The best thing you can do is involve your toddler in the upcoming move. Start talking to them about it a week before. You want to make it sound exciting, but it's best not to draw too much attention to the change. You don't want to worry them or give them any ideas of getting out of bed at night, so don't tell them they have to stay in their bed – this only makes them think about getting out of it!

Giving them the chance to get used to their bed before bedtime is advisable. Perhaps they can help you set up the new bed by choosing bedding or putting their favourite toys and comforter on the bed.

Place the bed in the same place as the cot if you can, to make it as familiar as possible.

If you have a bed without guardrails you can attach a separate guardrail to prevent them from falling out.

Once you've made the transition, your little one is going to be able to get up at night, so here are some tips to make sure that they're safe if they do:

- Check they can't get to any electrical cables or sockets, and that these are all covered.
- Put the bed up against a wall so your toddler is less likely to fall out.
- Clear away small toys or objects from the floor at night.
- Make sure any window blind cords are secured and out of your child's reach.
- Consider putting a gate on your toddler's door or at the top of the stairs.

Some toddlers transition really easily, and others will need a little more reassurance. Give them time to get used to the bed and accept that they might want to get out of bed to explore their newfound freedom. Stick to your usual bedtime routine and stay calm if things are difficult at first. If you find that they do get up in the night, the best thing to do is to take them back to bed, gently reminding them it's bedtime. You may have to do this a few times at first, but they will settle into the new environment if you remain calm and consistent.

the sleep sisters