



Crib to Bed Transition Guide

SLEEP EZZZ
CONSULTING

CRIB TO BED TRANSITION

Milestones and transitions in parenthood can be a fun and exciting time. However, some of them can be frightening for parents, and the crib to bed transition is no exception to this. This transition can be a tough one for parents to make, mostly because it's the first sign that your baby isn't much of a baby anymore at all!

Making sure your child is truly ready to make the switch is the first step to making this transition go smoothly. If this transition is made too soon, it can cause more sleep problems than you may already be experiencing. As a Certified Sleep Consultant, I cannot urge you enough to try **EVERYTHING** before making this transition if your child is under the age of 3.

WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME?

In the Sleep Consultant world, most Consultants agree that keeping a child in a crib as close to 3 years old is the best route to take. This is because under the age of 3 years, a child simply cannot understand the imaginary boundaries that come with the wide-open space of a “big kid bed.” Once those crib rails disappear, the child is now in control of their urge to get out of bed, and children under the age of 3 have a very low impulse control. This means they know they should be in bed but cannot resist the temptation to leave bed since they now have the choice. Of course, this may not be true for all children, but you can make that call as a parent based on your child’s personality.

WHY MAKE THIS TRANSITION?

The most common reasoning behind making this transition is your toddler has started to climb out of the crib. This can be a dangerous situation, especially if your child is doing this quietly in the middle of the night while the rest of your house is sleeping.

If you are considering making the change based on a climbing toddler, here are a few tips to try prior to fully making the switch!

-Try a sleep sack. A sleep sack restricts your child from fully lifting legs and using the stickiness from bare feet to brace off those crib rails. If your child is too large for a sleep sack, you can try footed pajamas with a piece of fabric sewn between the legs to restrict movement (see photo from www.littlegrunder.com)



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-Turn crib around. This trick only works if you have a crib that has a taller back panel. Simply turn your crib so the lower part is facing the wall.

-Lower the crib mattress. Lower the crib mattress as far as possible. This may sound obvious for some, but often times the mattress isn't as low as it could be.

-Remove all items that could be helping the escaping toddler. Does your crib have crib bumpers? Blankets and pillows? All of these things can be helpful for toddlers to add a bit more height and help the escape be a tiny bit easier to achieve.

If you have tried all of these tricks and your toddler is still escaping the crib, it is time to make the transition for everyone's safety.

WILL THIS FIX SLEEP PROBLEMS?

Another big reason parent's make this transition is to try and fix sleep problems. I can almost guarantee you that making this move with a younger toddler to fix their sleep troubles will not be helpful to your family. If your toddler was waking up through the night often while in a crib, they are likely to continue waking while in a big bed but can now leave their bed multiple times in the night. I advise not making this transition to try and fix a sleep trouble you are experiencing. Instead, reach out for help to ensure you have covered all bases of toddler sleep, and are setting your little one up for a successful night of sleep.

If your toddler hasn't shown any signs of climbing out and is a relatively good sleeper, it can be difficult to know when to make this transition. The answer to this is anytime you feel your child can handle the responsibility around the age of 3 years. Discuss this transition with your child and make sure this is a transition your child feels comfortable with. Some children feel more confident in a crib setting, and that is okay. As long as your child is safe in their crib and not past the weight limit on the specific design, there is no "maximum age" for crib transition.

HOW TO MAKE THIS TRANSITION

Once the decision is finalized to complete this transition with your child, it is best to be fully prepared. As with anything in the sleep world, I highly recommend creating a plan of action to fully prepare yourself on how you will handle certain scenarios that come along with this transition.

Step 1:

Make a plan of action and discuss the transition with your child. This is a great time to lay down ground rules surrounding the new freedom. One of the most common complaints during this transition is the “jack-in-the-box” behaviour. This simply means your child continues to get out of bed. The best way to handle this without creating any habits you aren’t willing to follow through with (such as laying with child until he/she falls asleep) is to silently return your child to their bed each time.

It is also important to understand that your child may not sleep in their bed for the first little bit of this transition. This is normal, it is your choice as a parent to move your child into their bed if they fall asleep on the floor. If they are safe, you do not have to move them.

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Step 2:

Pick out a bed. This choice varies among families. I personally recommend taking the side off of your child's crib (if it allows it) to give your child a chance to experience the freedom but in a bed they are familiar with. I personally recommend jumping to either a single or double bed from there. This is because a toddler bed isn't any larger than a crib and your child will quickly outgrow it.

Step 3:

Child proof your child's room. Outlet covers, doorknob covers, secure furniture to the wall, remove or put away all toys, bed rail, etc. I recommend bringing your toddler into their room and letting them roam free. This will help pinpoint all the things they shouldn't be touching without supervision. If it poses a risk, or you wouldn't want your child touching it without you around, it needs to go. No matter how smoothly you think this transition may go, it's best to take the safest route possible.

The door should remain closed as per fire safety recommendations. This also restricts your toddler from free roaming the house. If your child cannot handle the door closed, it is best to gate the doorway. You can double gate (2 gates on top of one another) to add extra security for climbers.

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Step 4:

Set up a reward system for the first while. It is no secret that children (toddlers especially) love rewards. A sticker chart designed with their favourite characters is a great way to enforce the rules surrounding their new freedom.

Step 5:

Involve your child! Let your child pick out their new bed, bedding, help rearrange their room, etc.

Step 6:

Stay consistent. Just like any other transition in life, consistency is key with moving away from a crib, and going to a regular bed. Stay consistent with walking your child back to bed, bedtime routines, not creating new habits you aren't willing to follow through with. A huge part of being successful within this transition is consistency with your consequences.

Most of all: remember to breathe. This transition will get easier in time and with patience. If you are feeling overwhelmed, reach out for some one-on-one support from a Certified Sleep Consultant.

Medical Disclaimer:

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