

Time Change and Babies/Toddlers: How to Help Your Little one Adjust

I have received many e-mails and phone calls from parents regarding the time change in spring and fall, asking how they can help their babies and toddlers transition to the new time without upsetting their sleep.

The first step in making this change is to look at the calendar to see when Day Light Savings starts/ends, usually mid-March and at the beginning of November. In spring, you will be setting your clocks ahead one hour, "spring forward," and in fall, back one hour, "fall back."

You can help your baby/toddler by starting to adjust their internal clocks/circadian rhythms ahead of the time change on Sunday. In fall, starting the Tuesday night BEFORE daylight savings, begin to put baby down 10 minutes later for bed. You can do this by comforting, singing or book reading, and/or starting the bedtime ritual/routine 10 minutes later. Do this for the rest of the week, so when the time change does happen, your baby will have slowly adjusted to the new time.

If your baby/toddler's bedtime is 7pm, it will look like this:

Tues 7:10pm bedtime

Wed. 7:20pm bedtime

Thurs. 7:30pm bedtime

Fri. 7:40pm bedtime

Sat. 7:50pm bedtime

Sun. 7pm bedtime (new time- old time will be 8pm)

You may notice that your baby/toddler may start yawning at 5 or 6pm. Alternatively, you may notice that your baby is waking up earlier, at 6am or earlier. You can take the time to darken your baby/toddler's room with blackout drapes or shades to help them to sleep a little later. Also, you can take this time to make some schedule/routine adjustments. For example, if your baby is a "night owl," you may decide to keep their bedtime the same without using the 10-minute time adjustment. So, if your baby goes to bed at 9pm, their new bedtime will be 8pm. It takes about a week for a baby/toddler to adjust to the new time. Your little one may be a bit cranky, or seem more tired than usual. Stick to your routine, and keep the daytime naps the same time.