

Fall Time Change and Babies/Toddlers: How to help your little one adjust

With the time change approaching, I have received many e-mails and phone calls from parents asking how they can help their babies and toddlers transition to the new time without upsetting their child's sleep.

The first step in making this change is to look at the calendar to see when Day Light Savings starts. It is normally at the beginning of November. The Fall Day Light Savings you will be setting your clocks back one hour, "fall back." We can count on darkness at app. 5pm, and morning light at app. 6am.

You can help your baby/toddler by starting to adjust their internal clocks/circadian rhythms ahead of the time change on Sunday. Starting the Tues night BEFORE daylight savings, begin to put the 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

Thus. 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 up your baby/toddler's room with darkening 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 at the same time.