

Spring 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 baby and toddler transition to the new time without upsetting their child's sleep.

First step is to look at your calendar and notice when the spring time change begins. It is normally towards the beginning of March. The spring time changes you will be setting clocks forward one hour: "spring forward."

You can help your baby/toddler by starting to adjust ahead of the time change. Starting Tuesday night BEFORE the time change, begin to put the baby down 10 minutes earlier for bed. You can do this by comforting, singing, or reading, and starting the bedtime ritual/routine 10 minutes earlier. Do this for the rest of the week, so when the time change does happen, your baby or toddler will have slowly adjusted to the new time.

If your child's bedtime is 7pm, it will look like this:

Tues. 6:50pm bedtime
Wed. 6:40pm bedtime
Thurs. 6:30pm bedtime
Fri. 6:20pm bedtime
Sat. 6:10pm bedtime
Sun. 7pm bedtime (new time- old time will be 6pm)

You may notice that your child 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 child'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 goes to bed on the early side and wakes early in the morning (5/6pm-5/6am) you may decide to keep his bedtime the same without using the 10-minute adjustments suggested above. So, if your baby goes to bed at 6pm, don't make any adjustments and with the time change and his new bedtime will be 7pm.

It takes about a week for baby/toddler to adjust to the new time. Your little one may be a bit cranky or seem more tired and may need more nap times during the day. Adjust to your child's needs and put them down for a nap 15 minutes earlier if your child seems overly tired. Otherwise, stick to your routine and keep the daytime naps at the same time.

