

MOVING TO THE “BIG KID’S BED”

Graduating from the crib to a bed is an important milestone in a child’s life. Most parents wait until their kids are around two to three years old before moving them to a “big kid’s bed”. There is no reason for parents to rush this change as long as the crib is still large enough for their child. However, once children begin climbing in and out of their cribs, parents may need to make the switch due to safety reasons. Although most children do not seriously injure themselves if they fall out of their crib, it’s best not to take any chances.

Some children find it difficult to give up the security of their crib and may resist moving to a larger bed. Parents can make this adjustment easier by preparing their kids in advance for the change. They need to describe the move a few weeks ahead of time so that their children can get used to the idea of sleeping in a different bed. Some kids are very concerned about what will happen to their crib and need to know where it will be stored or who it will be given to. They may also be anxious about what their new bed will look like. In order to make the transition to a “big kid’s bed” easier, parents could take their children shopping and allow them to participate in purchasing the new bed. This is typically a fun outing for kids since they get a chance to try out all of the different beds on the showroom floor. Letting children select new blankets, sheets, and pillow for their new bed may also get them excited about making the switch. If a child still shows reluctance in giving up his or her crib, parents should consider introducing the “big kid’s bed” at naptime while leaving the crib available for nighttime sleep. The crib can then be put away as soon as the child begins to feel more comfortable in their new bed.

Moving to a big bed sometimes opens the door for new bedtime problems since kids can easily get out and wander around. This can be a real headache for parents of multiples and the phrase “double or triple trouble” may take on a new meaning. Bedtime can easily turn into playtime once multiples realize that they are no longer restricted by their cribs. Some kids like to test out their new mattresses by jumping up and down on them while laughing hysterically with their sibling(s). Another favorite game for multiples is to play musical beds as they take turns trying out each other’s new beds. It can be a real challenge for their parents to get them settled down for the night. Parents of multiples may need to be more firm about enforcing bedtime routines after they move their children to regular beds. My husband and I are still struggling with getting our twins to calm down at night (they have been in “big girl beds” for two months now). One solution that has worked for us is to take away their favorite bedtime toys if they don’t cooperate. Just the threat of losing their most treasured toy for the night is usually enough to get them quiet.

It’s also common for children to wander out of their bed during the middle of the night and try to crawl into bed with their parents. This behavior could cause major sleep disruptions for both parents and their kids if it occurs frequently. According to Dr. Marc Weissbluth, author of Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child, night wandering may turn into a habit if parents don’t try to stop it in the beginning. Parents need to tell their children that down is down and that there is no getting out of bed until morning.

Weissbluth maintains that most children have naturally occurring partial arousals during sleep but are typically able to go back to sleep on their own. However, some kids force themselves completely awake and get out of bed to seek comfort from their parents. In order to prevent night wandering, Weissbluth suggests that parents put their child back to bed every time they get out. This could result in a sleepless night for the parents since it may take several attempts before the child finally falls asleep in his or her own bed. However, they are less likely to get out of bed the following night if they know that their parents mean business.

Parents may need to use a variety of methods to ensure that their kids stay put for the night. They could try offering their children rewards if they follow bedtime rules. For example, a special breakfast or outing can be arranged the next morning if their children stay in bed all night. It may also help to reinforce bedtime rules before putting children to bed. Parents should remind their kids that nighttime is for sleeping and that everyone must sleep in their own bed. They also need

to provide positive reinforcement by praising their children in the morning if they have followed the rules.

Moving to a regular bed is a big deal for a toddler and they typically can't wait to show off their new acquisition to friends and relatives. They take pride in being able to get in and out of bed by themselves and love the new freedom that a "big kid's bed" allows. While the transition to a larger bed may not always be smooth, most kids adjust quickly and rarely give their crib a backwards glance.

Sources:

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