



Transitioning from Crib to Toddler Bed

When is the Right Time?

There is no prize for moving out of the crib early. A familiar, contained sleep space often works best until safety or development says otherwise.



Keep the crib as long as it is safe.

Many children remain happily in a crib until around age 3 to 3½. Age alone is not the deciding factor. Follow the manufacturer's limits and transition sooner if your child can climb out.

It may be time to transition to a bed if your child...

- is able to climb out of the crib
- has reached the crib's stated limit
- needs bathroom access overnight
- can follow simple bedtime boundaries

Avoid combining this transition with other big life changes.

When possible, do not combine the move with travel, potty training, starting daycare, moving homes, a new baby coming, or another major change. If a baby is on the way, try to make the transition at least a month before the baby is due. A calm, predictable window makes the adjustment easier.

SAFETY NOTE

Health Canada advises moving to a toddler or standard bed when a child is taller than 90 cm or can climb out of the crib, whichever comes first. Always follow your crib manufacturer's instructions.

Build Excitement before the Change

A few weeks of simple preparation can make the new bed feel like an exciting milestone

1

Start talking about it early.

Use simple, positive language: "Soon you'll have your very own big-kid bed."
Read books about the change and let your child ask questions.

2

Make it feel like a milestone.

Connect the transition to growing up, not pressure: "Your new bed will give you more room to stretch and get cozy."

3

Let your child participate.

Offer two or three parent-approved choices, such as sheets, a blanket, bed-frame colour, or where a favourite stuffed animal will sit.

4

Keep it separate from a new baby.

Avoid saying the baby needs the crib or bedroom. Make the move well in advance, and let your toddler keep their familiar room if possible.

5

Celebrate without making it a test.

Preschool or another milestone can be a fun reason to celebrate becoming a "big kid," but the bed should not feel like something they must earn.

Choose the Bed & Prepare the Room

Once the crib is gone, the entire bedroom becomes the sleep space. Keep the setup low, simple, secure, and easy for adults to access.

Choosing the Sleep Space

Bed style

A toddler bed, low standard bed, or floor bed can all work. Choose what fits your home and your child.

Mattress

Use a firm, well-fitting mattress designed for the bed frame.

Falls

Consider a low profile and manufacturer-approved guardrails. Keep the area beside the bed clear.

Bedding

Avoid loose pillows or bulky bedding around the mattress.

Childproof the Whole Room

- ☐ Anchor dressers, shelves, and climbable furniture.
- ☐ Secure windows and blind cords; move furniture away from windows.
- ☐ Cover outlets and remove loose cords, lamps, choking hazards, and breakables.
- ☐ Keep monitor and sound-machine cords fully out of reach.
- ☐ Reduce stimulating toys at bedtime and nap time.
- ☐ Check smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms.

Keeping the Door Closed

A closed bedroom door can support fire safety and makes the sleep boundary clear.

If leaving the room could put your child near stairs or another hazard, use age-appropriate childproofing that still allows an adult to enter immediately. Never use a keyed lock or anything that could delay emergency access.

“Your room is safe. The door stays closed while you sleep, and I can always come in.”



Keep Bedtime Familiar

The bed is changing. Everything else can stay reassuringly predictable.

1.

1. Keep the same bedtime and routine.

Use the sequence your child already knows: bath, pyjamas, brush teeth, books, cuddles, goodnight phrase, lights out.

2.

2. Set the expectation before lights out.

Use one clear rule: "After we say goodnight, your body stays in bed until your clock turns green."

3.

3. Use an okay-to-wake clock.

Practise during the day so your child understands what each colour means before relying on it overnight.

4.

4. Respond calmly if they leave.

Quietly guide them back with minimal conversation. Keep your response brief, neutral, and consistent.

5.

5. Praise the behaviour you want.

In the morning, notice small wins: staying in the room, returning to bed, or waiting for the clock. Stickers or a simple rewards chart can also help reinforce progress.

KEEP YOUR RETURN-TO-BED PHRASE SHORT

"It's sleep time. Back to bed."



Your First Night

Simple, consistent, and calm works best. New freedom can be exciting, so expect some testing before the boundary feels familiar.

1

During the day

Let your child help finish the room. Practise getting in and out safely, show them the clock, and review the bedtime rule.

2

At bedtime

Follow the usual routine at the usual time. Keep the mood warm and positive, but not overly stimulating.

3

At lights out

Use one confident goodnight phrase: "You're safe, you're loved, and it's time to sleep."

4

If they get up

Return them calmly and consistently. Keep the response brief and boring rather than turning it into a negotiation.

5

In the morning

Celebrate the effort, reset the room if needed, and follow the same plan again that night.

**Expect repetition during the first few nights.
Consistency is what teaches the new boundary.**



Toddler Bed Checklist

Use this page as a final room and routine check before the first night.

- ☐ The crib is no longer safe or the timing feels developmentally appropriate.
- ☐ The new bed and mattress are assembled according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☐ Guardrails are installed correctly, if used.
- ☐ Furniture is anchored and windows, outlets, cords, and stairs are secured.
- ☐ The room has been simplified to reduce bedtime distractions.
- ☐ Your child has helped choose one or two items for the new setup.
- ☐ You have explained the bedtime boundary and practiced the okay-to-wake clock.
- ☐ The bedtime routine will remain constant.
- ☐ All caregivers agree on how they will respond if your child gets out of bed.



Need More Support?

If you need help with:

- repeated room exits
- split nights
- bedtime battles
- nap refusal
- early morning wakes
- help with independent sleep

I'd love to help.

Book your FREE discovery call



www.peacefulsleepbypriya.com