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Helping Sleepy Angels Get Their Rest!

Spring Ahead

Spring is the beginning of Daylight Savings Time. We are all going to move our clocks ahead 1 hour and readjust our circadian rhythms, or internal clocks, to the new times. This change is easier on adults and older children who are able to just shift their internal clocks and roll with it. Most small children will need more understanding during the first couple of weeks as they are a bit out of sorts with new bedtimes and wake-ups. However, little ones definitely need more preparation and a gentler approach to helping their bodies adjust to new routines.

Here are some tips to help make a smoother transition to the new times:

- **** Determine what you would like the new time to be;** if the adjusted time works well for your family, don't do anything new and enjoy the later bedtime and wake-ups
- You can start this before the time change happens so you are prepared for the new time when it occurs or start adjusting times when the time change hits.
- Begin bedtime earlier by 15 minutes and then wake-up time and naps as well. Do this until the new time is set and then repeat until you've moved bedtime to the time that you wish it to be and the morning wake-up time is shifted as well.
- Some children may be able to shift their times quicker, if this is the case you can do 30 minutes earlier until the new time is set and then repeat.

Now, doesn't that sound simple? Here are a few important details that will help to make this transition smoother:

1. Begin the bedtime and naptime routines earlier. Start with 15-20 minutes earlier. You may need to start earlier if you see sleepy cues; you want to work with their little bodies and get them to sleep while the melatonin is getting them ready for sleep. Be flexible to the shifting of their bedtime/wake-up time taking a few extra days.
2. Get them up earlier in the morning; start with 15 minutes. You need to do a 'dramatic wake-up' (turn on the lights & be very enthusiastic).
3. Keep the new time for a few days; until you see they are waking on their own at the new time and going down for bed well. Repeat until you get to the desired time.

Remember, most children need A LOT of sleep! The right AMOUNT and QUALITY of sleep affects our little angels':

- attention span
- adaptability
- aggressive behavior
- obesity
- irritability and frustration
- moodiness and emotional problems
- ability to play independently
- ability to take in fully and learn from their environment



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As always, consistency is of utmost importance!