



Heather N. Plante
Certified Maternity & Child Sleep Consultant
780-686-2753

Helping Sleepy Angels Get Their Rest!

It is nearly the end of Daylight Savings Time. We are all going to move our clocks back 1 hour and will need to readjust our circadian rhythms, or internal clocks, to the new time. 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 week or two as they are a bit out of sorts with new bedtimes and wake-ups. 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:

- Start about 2 weeks before the time change
- Push bedtime later by 15 minutes and then wake-up time as well. Do this until this new time is set (usually 3-4 days) 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 30minutes later until the new time is set and then repeat.

Here are a few important details that will help to make this transition smoother:

1. Bedtime - Be sure to watch your little angels' sleepy cues as you are trying to push bedtime to be later; you want to work with their little bodies and get them to sleep while the melatonin is getting them ready for sleep. When you are keeping them up later, you are flirting with their 2nd wind. The 2nd wind is when cortisol is racing through their little bodies and this will keep them awake for another hour. Be flexible to the shifting of their bedtime/wake-up time, taking a few extra days if you need to, as you may need to get them into bed sooner than the 15 minutes in order to be sure to get them to sleep before that 2nd wind.
2. Morning - Hold off getting them up in the morning by 15 minutes (or the same length of time that you delayed bedtime), keep the room dark - sit with them if needed or encourage them back to sleep in the same way that you would if it were the middle of the night. Then, when they wake any time after the new wake-up time, you will need to do a 'dramatic wake-up' (turn on the lights & be very enthusiastic). If they have not gone back to sleep, still do a dramatic wake-up at the new wake-up time as this will help with re-setting their circadian rhythm to the new 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

As always, consistency is of utmost importance!