

Baby and toddler sleep time with daylight saving.

Every year around this time the phone calls pour in with parents panicking about the transition of their baby's sleeps and the dreaded daylight saving. I say dreaded because while it may be nice for some to enjoy the extra daylight hours after work or on weekends, it is often a difficult time for parents. The extra daylight entices longer activity in the afternoon/evenings leading to later meal times and delayed bedtimes by toddlers and children "because the sun's still up mum!". This in turn leads to less sleep, overtired children, less "me time" for mums and dad's and all round frustration.

The simple answer in coping with daylight saving is to keep your eye on the clock, prevent your children from being overtired when possible and to keep your baby or toddler's bedroom as dark as possible before bedtime!

For new the baby who has not established a routine in their body clock, life will continue as normal and they will wake for feeds when they are hungry. Daylight saving will only negatively effect the parents of babies and toddlers over 6 months of age who are sleeping, feeding and playing at roughly the same time each day and the routine is working well.

In transitioning sleep times I have found that the best approach is a gentle one that takes about 1 week. The morning daylight saving begins in Australia in October your baby/toddler will wake according to their body clock, which will be 1 hour later than the day before (because we 'lose ' an hour on the clock). From that Sunday, you can start to begin the sleep times for the toddler 10-15 minutes earlier per sleep each day. For example: If the usual routine is 9am, 1pm and 7pm for the day sleeps, On the first day your baby/toddler will want to sleep at 10am, 2pm and 8pm. So you might aim for 9.45am, 1.45pm and 7.45pm. Then the next day 9.30am, 1.30pm and 7.30pm etc. Until over the period of a week the baby or toddler's sleep times have moved to the 'normal' time on the clock. Naturally this whole process will take time to adjust and everyone will feel a little tired and 'out of sorts', even the adults take about a week for their body clocks to adjust. It's surprising how quickly our body clocks adjust when changing times zones across the world. The message is don't panic, have a plan and just go with the flow.

Tip: Plan to gently reduce your toddlers sleep time over a week to the 'normal' time and keep them so active they are begging to go to bed no matter how light it is outside!!

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Baby Sleep Consultant-Newborns to 5 yrs**

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