



Early Learning Digest

Research-based early childhood development information provided by Lifetrack



January 2015

Special Sleep Issue

Creating a Safe Sleep Environment

If you just had a baby, are expecting, or are taking care of a young infant, it's important to create a safe sleep environment for your baby. Because babies spend much of their time sleeping, the nursery should be the safest room in the house.

With any crib, bassinet or play yard, follow a few simple rules to keep babies sleeping safely:

- Never place pillows or thick quilts in a baby's crib. Babies can roll over or pull blankets over their faces and suffocate.
- Make sure the gap between the sides of the crib and the mattress is no larger than two fingers.
- Assemble cribs properly. If you are unsure of assembly, call the manufacturer for assistance.
- Avoid using cribs older than 10 years, broken or modified cribs. Loose components or broken slats can cause strangulation if an



- infant's body or head passes through a gap.
- Set up play yards according to the manufacturer's directions. Only use the mattress pad provided and do not add extra padding.
- Never place a crib near a window with curtain, blind or baby monitor cords; babies can strangle on cords.

Source: "Learn How to Put Your Baby to Sleep Safely," United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/cribs/>.

Bedwetting

Did you know that there are about 5 million children in the United States who wet the bed? Though most children are toilet trained between 2 and 4 years of age, some children may not be able to stay dry at night until they are older. Children develop at their own rate.

Bedwetting is not a serious medical condition, but it can be a challenging problem for children and parents. The problem usually disappears as children get older. If children reach school age and still have problems wetting the bed, it most likely means they have never developed nighttime bladder control. If you are concerned about your child's bedwetting or your child expresses concern, talk with your child's doctor.

Keep the following in mind when dealing with bedwetting:

- Avoid blaming your child. It is not your child's fault.
- Be honest with your child about what is going on. Let your child know it's not his fault and that most children outgrow bedwetting.
- Be sensitive to your child's feelings. If you don't make a big deal out of bedwetting, chances are your child will not either.
- Let your child help. Encourage your child to help change the wet sheets

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If you have concerns about your child's growth and development, please talk to your child's health care provider or call 1-866-693-GROW (4769), to talk to a professional and find out how you can get connected with various resources in Minnesota.



Bedwetting

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and covers. This teaches responsibility. It can also keep your child from feeling embarrassed if the rest of the family knows. However, if your child sees it as punishment, it is not recommended.

- Set a no-teasing rule in your family. Do not let family members, especially siblings, tease your child.
- Take steps before bedtime. Have your child use the toilet and avoid drinking large amounts of fluid just before bedtime.
- Be positive. Reward your child for dry nights. Offer support, not punishment, for wet nights.

In most cases, bedwetting decreases as the child's body matures. By the teen years, almost all children have outgrown bedwetting. Until your child outgrows bedwetting, your child will need a lot of emotional support from your family. Support from your child's doctor can also help.

Source: "Bedwetting," <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/Bedwetting.aspx>, November 2013.



for Families at

<http://bit.ly/solutions-for-families>

The Big Kid Bed!

Transitioning toddlers to a big kid bed is a special event! Most children will be happy to move to a bigger bed and be more willingly stay in their beds than they did in their cribs. However, for a few, the transition must be managed closely.

Continue with your bedtime routine.

If your child gets out of bed, calmly and quietly lead her back and tell her she must stay in bed. When she gets back into bed, tell her what a big girl she is being and assure her that you will check on her during the night.

Prepare yourself for a bedtime struggle.

Calmly lead your child back to bed each time she gets out of bed. Praise her for staying in bed. You may have to repeat this for several nights in a row. By staying calm and keeping the atmosphere quiet, the excitement of getting out of bed will soon fade.

Avoid rewarding bedroom break-outs.

Don't allow your child to climb into your bed or join family members who are still up. Insist on the rule that once it's time to sleep, people have to stay in bed until morning unless they have to go to the bathroom. Praise her in the morning for staying in bed all night.

Make climbers safer. Let your child know that the only time climbing is acceptable is when sleep or nap time is over. Make your child's room as safe and hazard-free as you can.



Clear away furniture and large toys that could injure your child if she fell against them. Install safety gates across your toddler's bedroom door to keep her from wandering when you are not awake. Also, be sure to place a gate at the top of the stairs to prevent possible injury if your child gets out of bed.

Source: "Big Kid Beds: When to Make the Switch," <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Big-Kid-Beds-When-To-Make-the-Switch.aspx>, September 2013.

Test Your Knowledge!

Safe sleep environments for babies...

- 1) T F The gap between the sides of the crib and the mattress should be no larger than two fingers.
- 2) T F Placing a crib near a window with curtain, blind or baby monitor cords can pose a strangulation hazard.
- 3) T F It is okay to use cribs older than 10 years or more.