

## Moving your child from cot to bed



### Key facts

Most children move from their cot to a bed between 18 months and 3 and a half years old.

Every child is different, some children adjust easily to a big bed while others don't.

It is important to keep your house safe for your child.

Be sure to keep sleep areas for all young children free of clutter, such as soft toys.

Options for a first bed include a special toddler bed or a mattress on the floor.

Wait until your child is at least 2 years old before you give your child a pillow for sleep.

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## **When is the best time to move?**

Most children move from a cot to a bed between the ages of 18 months and 3 and a half years. There is no set time to move your child, and every child is different, but it is safer to wait until they are at least 2 years old.

You might consider moving your child into a bed when:

they have outgrown the cot

another baby arrives \ (move your child into a bed at least 6 to 8 weeks before the baby is born, or put the baby in a bassinet for a few months before you move your older child)

they are trying to climb out of the cot

they are toilet training and need to get to the bathroom easily

## **What type of bed should I move my child to?**

A floor mattress is a great option, make sure the area around the mattress is clutter-free. A toddler bed is a safe and cost-effective option. They are lower to the ground, which reduces the chances of your child hurting themselves if they fall out.

If you are using an adult bed, make sure there is no space between the bed and the wall where your child could get stuck. You can use a portable bed rail to stop your child from falling out of bed. It is important to make sure it is installed properly and that there is no gap between the mattress and the rail. You can lay soft floor materials below the bed in case they fall out.

The sleep area for all young children should be free of clutter from soft toys. Wait until your child is at least 2 years old before you introduce a pillow for sleep.

## **How can I make my house safe?**

Once your child is in a bed, they can move around the bedroom during the night. Here are some tips to keep your child safe:

Install safety locks on any windows - make sure any gaps aren't big enough for your child to climb through.

Make sure cords from curtains and blinds are out of reach.

Attach heavy furniture to the wall with brackets.

Make sure medicines and poisons are out of reach, as well as coins, buttons, batteries, and anything small that would be dangerous if swallowed.

Keep electrical appliances out of reach and install safety plugs in electrical outlets.

Use secure gates or lock doors to ensure children do not have access to stairs if it is unsafe to go up or down them unsupervised.

Put away anything your child could climb on, like chairs and ladders.

### **Tips to help your child move into a bed**

Every child is different. Some children adjust easily to a big bed while others don't. It is often harder for your first child to make the transition than for later children. Here are some tips to help your child adjust:

Put the bed in the same position in the room as the cot.

Give your child the same blanket they used in the cot.

Involve your child in choosing the new bed or sheet and planning the move.

Keep to the same bedtime routine, with some quiet time before bed.

Let your child climb into bed and pull up the covers by themselves.

Tell your child you are proud of them for moving into a bed.

Some children will keep getting out of bed after being tucked in at night.

Gently tell them to go back to bed and leave the room. You might need to do this several times until your child settles down.