



# Help for sleep problems

Toddlers 1 - 3 years



Easy English

## Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**
  
- we write what the hard word means.

## You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book
  
- know what this book is about
  
- find more information.



## About this book



This book is written by the  
Department of Health and Human Services.



This book tells you about help for  
**sleep problems** in toddlers aged **1 - 3** years.

## Severe night waking



- Severe night waking means your toddler
- wakes up more than 3 times per night



- stays awake for more than 20 minutes



- takes more than 30 minutes to settle



- needs to sleep in bed with you.

## Help with sleep concerns

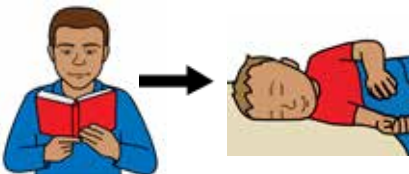


To help your toddler sleep make sure you

- notice the things they do when they are tired



- put your toddler in bed when you think they are tired



- do things in the same order every day before sleep time



- keep the setting for sleep time the same.  
For example, make it dark and quiet.

## Parental presence



**Parental presence** means you pretend to sleep in the same room as your toddler to make them feel safe.



Make sure your toddler can see you when you pretend to sleep. For example, lie next to the cot or toddler bed with a night light.



Every time your toddler wakes up, make some noise so they know you are there.

If your toddler does **not** go back to sleep

- do **not** pick up your toddler



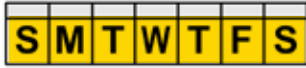
- try a gentle shush or pats



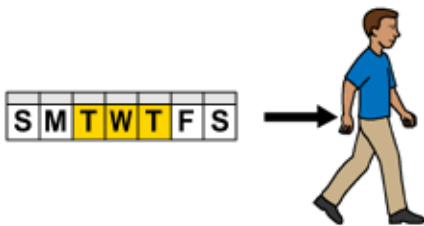
- after 2 minutes go back to your bed and pretend to sleep.



You can use parental presence for day time naps too.



It might take 7 - 10 days for parental presence to work.



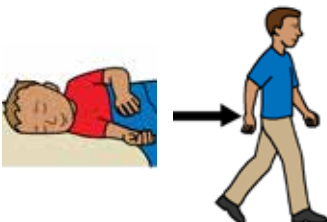
You can go back to your own room when your toddler sleeps well for 3 days in a row.

## Camping out



Camping out means you

- stay in the room until your toddler sleeps



- leave your toddler to sleep on their own

- do **not** sleep in the room.

Use camping out in steps.

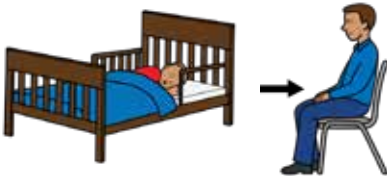
For example



1 Try gentle pats until your toddler sleeps.



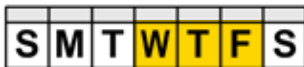
2 Sit in a chair next to the bed until your toddler sleeps - do **not** touch your toddler.



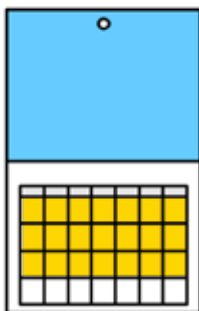
3 Move your chair a bit more away from the bed each day.



4 Move your chair outside the door.



Each step might take 2 - 3 days to work.



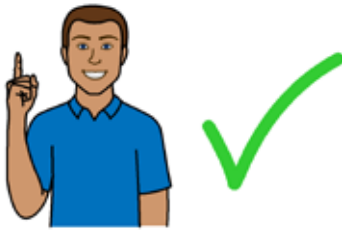
It might take 1 - 3 weeks for your toddler to go to sleep without you in the room.



## Controlled comforting



**Controlled comforting** means you let your toddler cry for a **short time** before you check on them.



You **must** know the right way to use controlled comforting or it will **not** work.



Talk to your Maternal and Child Health Nurse before you try controlled comforting.

You can get contact information at the end of this book.

## Bed time fading

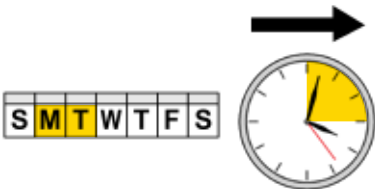
**Bed time fading** can help your toddler sleep.

Follow these steps for bed time fading.

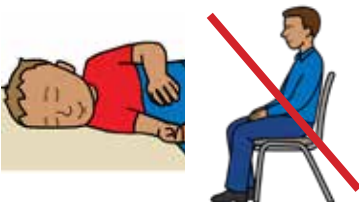


1. Write down the time when your toddler falls asleep for 7 nights in a row.

2. Find the latest time your toddler went to sleep in 7 nights and make it the new bed time.

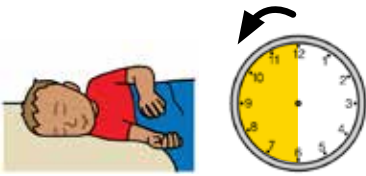


3. Make bed time 15 minutes later every 2 days.



4. Stop fading when your toddler goes to sleep on their own and does **not** wake up a lot at night.

Make sure your toddler is 2 - 3 years old before you use bed time fading.



You can use bed time fading to make bed time earlier too.



Talk to your Maternal and Child Health Nurse before you try bed time fading.

## Move your toddler to a bed

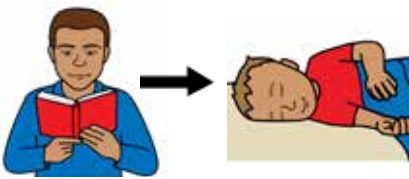


You can move your toddler to a bed if they try to get out of the cot.



To help your toddler move to a bed

- give your toddler a blanket from the cot so they feel safe



- do things in the same order every day before sleep time



- make your toddler feel important.

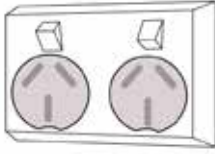
For example

- let them help set up the new bed

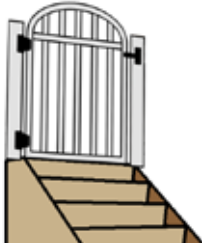
- tell them how grown up they are.

You must make sure the bedroom is safe.

For example



- cover up cords and powerpoints



- block off stairs.

## Calling out



Your toddler might

- **not** like the new bed



- call out to you at night.

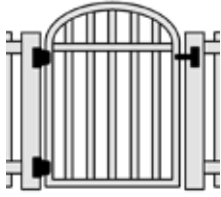


If your toddler calls out do **not** give them a lot of attention.

- only ask your toddler to go back to bed **once**

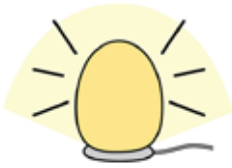
- use their name when you speak to them.

There are things you can do to help with calling out.



For example

- a child gate to keep your toddler in the room



- a safe night light if your toddler is scared of the dark.

You can put your toddler back to bed if they call out.

Do **not**



- talk



- look them in the eye

- tell them off.



You might put your toddler back to bed a lot of times before they learn to stay.



If your toddler gets out of bed again tell them you will

- close the door because they did **not** stay in bed

and



- open the door when they **do** stay in bed.



Stay near the door to check your toddler is ok.



Talk to your Maternal and Child Health Nurse for help with calling out first.



## More information

For more information contact the  
Department of Health and Human Services.



Website

[https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/  
healthyliving/Child-health-0-6](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/Child-health-0-6)

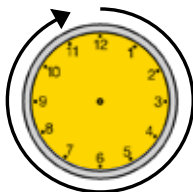


If you are worried about your toddler contact

- your Maternal and Child Health Nurse
  
- call the Maternal and Child Health Line.



Call 13 22 29



The helpline is open 24 hours per day and  
7 days per week.



You can also see your doctor for more help.



## More Easy English

There are more Easy English books on our website about

- sleep for toddlers



- good sleep routines.



For information about safe sleep go to the Red Nose website

[rednose.org.au/resources/education](http://rednose.org.au/resources/education)



For information about getting to know your child go to the Raising Children website

[raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/connecting-communicating/connecting/parent-child-relationships](http://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/connecting-communicating/connecting/parent-child-relationships)

**National  
Relay  
Service**

**If you need help to speak or listen**

You can use the National Relay Service or NRS if you need help to make a call.



Call the NRS help desk

1800 555 660



Go to the NRS website

[communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs](http://communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs)





To receive this publication in an accessible format email Maternal and Child Health and Parenting:  
[MCH@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:MCH@dhhs.vic.gov.au).

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