

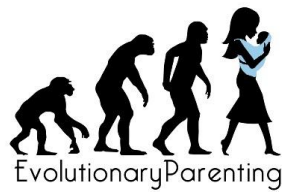
Moving to Their Own Sleep Space

Most of the families I work with are bedsharing at least part of the time. The concern then always comes about how this situation ends. What does that look like? Here I want to walk through the main steps for moving to a new sleep space *when the time is right*. And remember: there is no rush on this if you're comfortable with the setup you have! It is wholly normal to continue bedsharing for some time.

When is your child ready? This is often the biggest question and the answer is, "I don't know". Each child is different. Obviously if your child is asking for their own space, they're ready, but most families aren't waiting that long. So I would say you probably don't want to try it until night wakings are a little more under control. If your child is waking 2-3 times a night, that's probably good enough to embark on the change if you want to.

The steps:

1. Make sure you have the space in your child's new room or bed (if remaining co-sleeping but moving away from bedsharing) for you and your child. I often recommend a double bed and know that your child can use this bed until they're out of the house so it's a long-term investment.
2. Spend two weeks sleeping all night with your child in the new space. This will help make the familiarization process of the space easier as your child won't experience anxiety or panic surrounding this space.
3. During this time, I also recommend reading books about kids who are moving to sleeping alone. I personally prefer stories that are a little silly here but goodness knows there are tons of books out there on this. If you can and want to, consider creating your own story to share with your child and may be one you read or listen to at night (listen to if you record it on your phone like an audiobook).
4. You may also want to consider introducing a stuffy at this point. Most people consider transition objects as ones to comfort the child, but actually as they get older, children benefit most from having objects they are taking care of. This means introducing a new stuffy or doll that your child is in charge of and has to take care of, including snuggling them to sleep at night and overnight. During the wakings at night, make sure your child gets their stuffy and helps put them to sleep while you help them. You can even suggest that the stuffy is what is waking your child at night so they may not feel that they have the tools to comfort their stuffy and help them get back to sleep.
5. Once your child is settled with you in the bed and is waking the usual amount of times (there may be some increases at the start), then you can start to do the first stretch



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away, but join your child at their first waking. I would keep doing this for at least a week. If you find that your child's first stretch gets shorter and shorter, it means they aren't ready for you to leave for that first stretch and you may need to backtrack to being there again or being there to "catch" that first waking.

6. Continue by settling that first waking with support and then returning to your space and coming for the second waking, then the third, and so on until you are able to settle each waking and make it to the morning.
7. Remember that although it can be hard, your child develops a greater sense of safety in a space when they *wake up* there, not by falling asleep somewhere. This is why it's so important for you to go into the room with them instead of just having them fall asleep and join you in bed. Of course, if you welcome the snuggles, keep them coming!!