Parental Presence
You may prefer this option if your baby has never been separated from you at sleep time.
1. Once your toddler is calm and drowsy lie down or sit beside the cot within sight of your toddler and pretend to be asleep.
2. If your toddler remains wakeful, give a little cough or quietly say ‘ssshhh time to sleep’ so he/she knows you are still in the room.
3. If your toddler becomes distressed use calm, repetitious strategies to soothe, try not to pick your toddler up; then lie or sit beside the cot.
4. You may have to repeat this several times before your toddler is able to calm and relax into a drowsy state and fall asleep.
5. Stay in the room until your toddler is asleep during the day and sleep in the same room as your child during the night.
Continue this for at least 1 week or until your toddler has 3 nights in a row of relatively uninterrupted sleep. You can now begin to leave the room before your toddler is asleep.

Transitioning from cot to bed
1. Start by encouraging your toddler to climb into bed unaided.
2. Give your toddler verbal reassurances and calmly say “it’s bedtime now”.
3. Be positive, gentle and firm as you discourage your toddler from climbing out of bed saying “it’s time to go to sleep now”.
4. Keep a familiar blanket, toy that your toddler chooses from his/her cot to help him/her feel more secure in her new bed – nothing small that she/he can swallow or choke on.
5. You may like to have your toddler help choose the bedding for their new bed to make this step a positive and fun experience.
6. Make sure your toddler has a comforter (comfort object), to help him/her feel safe and secure. This is definitely not the time to get rid of “security objects”.
7. Praise your toddler when he/she manages to stay in the “big bed”.
8. If your toddler does get out of the bed, gently walk him/her back to bed, tuck him/her back in and say good night. Sometimes you will have to do this several times and you will need to stay as calm as possible.
9. You may need to use the other settling techniques described elsewhere in this pamphlet such as sitting beside the bed

Responsive Settling
Responsive settling is a way to sensitively respond and support each stage of your child’s sleep development.

For parenting advice call:
The Tresillian Parent’s Help Line
1300 2 PARENT (1300 272 736) or
Visit the Tresillian website at
tresillian.org.au
and live chat with a Tresillian nurse.

facebook
Join our Facebook community at
Tresillian Early Parenting.

tresillian.org.au
Sleep is complex and follows a normal developmental course similar to the way your toddler develops the ability to walk and talk. During the toddler years routines fit more comfortably in with the rest of your family. Daytime naps get shorter and your toddler will have most of their sleep during the night-time hours. Sometimes problems with going to sleep or resettling during the night can arise or continue to occur during the toddler years. This pamphlet provides some ideas to help with your toddler’s sleep patterns.

Bedtime routines
A quiet soothing bedtime routine signals to your toddler that it’s time for sleep, helps him/her settle into bed and then sleep better.
- The routine needs to be consistent, easy and familiar both day and night
- Your toddler’s routine should take no longer than 30 to 40 minutes
- Avoid stimulating activities prior to sleep
- Use a soft, low voice to read stories from books and sing songs
- Give plenty of calm loving cuddles and a goodnight kiss
- If your toddler has a special toy or comforter this will be an important part of the routine
- Soothing bath at the end of the day before the long night-time sleep
- Nappy change, into pyjamas and importantly teeth cleaning
- Avoid the use of smart phones, tablets, TV, game consoles and fluorescent lights as these are very stimulating and interfere with the onset of sleep
- Ensure your toddler is clothed according to the temperature of the room e.g. warm pyjamas if it’s cold, or use a sleeping bag with fitted artholes and no hood
- If your toddler is in a cot ensure that the sides are up and securely in place.

Settling options
The following techniques are a guide to help you choose a way that best suits you and your toddler to settle to sleep and for re-settling if they wake during their sleep.

Toddler Responsive Settling
If your toddler has never settled to sleep on their own you may like to start with modified responsive settling. This provides your toddler with reassurance and support while also providing an opportunity for your toddler to develop their own way of falling asleep.

Start with a familiar and soothing bedtime routine.
1. Talk quietly and reassuringly as you take your toddler to their bed e.g. ‘good night it is time for sleep’
2. Once in bed, depending on the age of your toddler, you can continue the bedtime routine with a story, or simply provide verbal reassurance in calm, soothing voice.
3. If your toddler starts to fuss or cry then cuddle, pat or stroke soothingly until he/she is calm. Try to keep your toddler in the cot or bed
4. Once your toddler is calm and drowsy, move away from the cot/bed or leave the room
5. If your toddler starts to fuss or cry go back and cuddle, pat or stroke soothingly until he/she is calm. Try to keep your toddler in their bed e.g. ‘good night it is time for sleep’
6. If your toddler continues to be very upset, then try sitting on a chair beside the cot or bed while still awake and drowsy
7. The length of time it takes to soothe and settle your toddler will decrease as she/he begins to calm to sleep
8. If your toddler wakes during the night and doesn’t manage to self-settle, follow steps 3-7 providing comfort/reassurance.
9. If your toddler is very distressed you will need to pick him/her up, cuddle soothe and calm. A distressed toddler needs your help.

Daytime sleeps
During the day if your toddler has troubling falling asleep or resettling during a sleep try:
- responsive settling (steps 1-4)
- stay with your child until asleep
- if your toddler wakes during the sleep and you can’t resettle, get your toddler up and continue with your daily routine and try again at the next sleep time

Toddler settling strategies
1. If you have tried putting your toddler to bed but he/she continues to be distressed or crying, pick him/her up and cuddle until calm. Check your toddler’s nappy and then attempt to resettle
2. Speak gently and quietly to reassure your toddler repeating calmly “it’s time for sleep”. Once your toddler is calm again, position her/him comfortably in the cot or bed while still awake and drowsy
3. If your toddler still doesn’t settle and starts to cry, pick him/her up again and cuddle until calm
4. You could try giving your toddler a drink of water, but nothing else
5. Try not leaving the bedroom. Stay near the bed while you calm and settle your toddler.
6. If your toddler continues to be very upset, then try staying in the room until he/she falls asleep in the bed. You can sit on a chair quietly next to the bed or lay your head on the bed next to your toddler while you continue to soothe and reassure.
7. The length of time it takes to soothe and settle your toddler will decrease as she/he begins to calm to sleep
8. If you find your toddler needs you to stay in the room while he/she falls asleep, try sitting on a chair beside the cot or bed, and then, over time, gradually move your chair a little further away as he/she gains more confidence in being able to fall asleep without you being so close.
9. Eventually move your chair until you are sitting near or just outside the door, responding with your gentle voice that you’re still there
10. You might like to try Parental Presence (over page) if your toddler is anxious about separating from you at sleep time.