

A quick guide to common toddler and preschooler sleep challenges

Problem: Your children bring up their **'worries'** just as you're putting them into bed.

Tip: Tell your child you'll make a note about it, and you can speak about it at a **dedicated 'worry time' during the day**. Role play or drawing is an effective way to learn about what's on a child's mind if they don't have the words for it.



Problem: Your child is **anxious** about bedtime.

Tip: Routine, and functional rituals can decrease anxiety — when our children know that the same thing happens each night before bed, they don't have to worry about what's coming up next. Think of this more in terms of it being a 'ritual' and less associated with specific timing.

Problem: **Daylight Saving** is throwing bedtime off.

Tip: In the lead up to time zone changes or the start and end of Daylight Saving, consciously **adjust your child's bedtime slightly over a period of a week** or so. This gets them closer to the 'new' time which makes the transition easier. Try window blackout blinds to ensure the natural rise of melatonin can occur to assist with sleep onset.



Problem: They complain of being **too hot/cold** or wake up cold.

Tip: Make their environment conducive to sleep. **18–20°C is an ideal temperature**, with suitable sleepwear and bedding. ergoPouch's What to Wear temperature guide is a great resource to help you dress your little one appropriately for sleep.

Problem: Your child shows **controlling behaviours** like dictating which parent should put them to bed.

Tip: Stick to a predictable bedtime routine nightly, but **exercise a small amount of flexibility** with the routine so that your child doesn't become rigid.

Problem: Your child **calls out or keeps getting out of bed** once you've said 'good night'.

Tip: Spend **quality time together during the day** to 'fill their cup', to help prevent calling out/getting up after lights out. Small rewards in the morning, such as a special breakfast, sticker or extra screen time, can help encourage your child to stay in their bed overnight.



Problem: Meltdowns about the transition **from 'fun' to bedtime**.

Tip: Add in a 'transition activity' so that you're going from something fun (TV), to something less fun but still preferred (reading), before eventually transitioning to bed. This lessens the sudden blow of transitioning from super fun to super bad! Also try adding in elements of **highly preferred activities or interests**. For instance, say affirmations together, or use sleepwear or bed linen with a favourite tv character on it to increase motivation.

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