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Transitioning from Two Naps to One

Toddlers usually are ready to drop the morning nap by fifteen -eighteen months. A little earlier or a little later is normal, but be sure to watch your child, not the calendar. Especially watch for changes in your child's morning nap patterns. It may take her longer to fall asleep, or she may wake up from the nap earlier. She may also sleep so long in the morning that she won't nap in the afternoon, meaning you'll have a very overtired toddler by bedtime. Don't mistake one abbreviated morning nap for the sign that your child's ready for change. When the pattern becomes consistent, the time is right to begin the transition.

Signs your child is ready to transition from two naps to one:

1. your child is getting 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep at night
2. your child is taking longer and longer to fall asleep for the morning nap
3. your child takes an increasingly shorter morning nap or too long of a morning nap and refuses an afternoon nap. In the end, you feel stuck in the "one nap is not enough and two is too many" phase

When you are ready to begin the transition, push your child's morning nap a little later. Try delaying it until around 11:00am for two or three days. Then push it until 11:30am for a few days, then to noon, and so on. Your ultimate goal should be to have her asleep by 12:30pm or 1:00pm **within 7-10 days.**

Things to remember:

- Slowly push the morning nap later in 20 to 30 minute increments, until you reach 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm. Do this gradually (i.e. in small increments over 2-3 days) to avoid overtiredness or difficulty getting to sleep. This will be her only nap for the day, so try to resettle her back to sleep if the nap is too short.

- Bedtime will often need to be earlier during this transition – around 7:00 – 7:30 pm.
- It is best NOT to transition to one nap until your child is sleeping through the night fairly consistently or for at least 3 weeks.
- Be open to an occasional two-nap day!

Remember, there is an art to sleeping! We must teach our children how to put themselves to sleep in order for them to recognize their own need for it later in life. It's tempting to cut out a nap in a baby's schedule for convenience, but remember, you both will pay the price later at bedtime! Take time to enjoy this small window of opportunity when you are offered two breaks in your busy day. It can be a great time to concentrate on yourself or have some special time with an older child! Sleep well!