



Nap Transitions: The Lowdown

So here's the deal with nap transitions, in a nutshell: They're extremely frustrating! Just as you thought you had everything sorted out with your baby's sleep and his schedule, he starts to go through a nap transition, which can throw everything off.

Nap transitions also happen somewhat frequently. The following is a list of all nap transitions:

- a. four naps to three by 4-6 months of age
- b. three naps to two by 6-9 months of age
- c. two naps to one by 15-18 months of age
- d. one nap to no naps, somewhere between 2-4 years of age

Nap transitions are usually triggered by at least one of the following factors:

1) The Lengthening of a Baby's Wake Windows

If a baby can't stay awake for longer periods of time, he'll need to nap more frequently in order to avoid overtiredness from staying awake for so long. However, once the baby can stay awake for longer periods of time without getting overtired, there won't be enough room to squeeze in that extra nap.

2) The Decrease in Baby's Daytime Sleep Requirements

As babies and toddlers get older, their sleep requirements lesson and they don't need to nap as much during the day as they used

to. This also usually goes hand in hand with the baby's wake windows lengthening.

3) Nighttime Sleep Lengthens

When the baby begins to give you more consolidated nighttime sleep and no longer needs to eat as much (or at all!) at night, and is waking up more rested than before, she won't need as much daytime sleep to compensate for the broken nighttime sleep.

One very important point I want to make about nap transitions: **nap transitions must ALWAYS be baby-led!** Don't force the nap transition if the baby isn't ready. Allow the baby to prove to YOU that she's ready.

So how do you know that your baby is ready to drop a nap?

1. The first sign that your baby is ready to drop a nap is that he is refusing to take a nap completely. So you put your baby down for his nap at his regular time, and instead of falling asleep like he usually does, he spends the next hour talking to himself, playing with his feet, and whining. If this happens on a regular basis, it might mean that he's ready to drop this nap.

2. The second sign that a nap transition might be approaching is if your baby's nap times begin to change. If the nap times keep getting later and later, you might not have time to fit that additional nap into the day.

3. The third sign that a nap transition is around the corner is if nap durations begin to change. Once your baby starts taking bigger, longer naps, you might find that last nap disappears because you'll no longer need it—if the second last nap already ends so late in the day, the next time your baby goes to sleep will be bedtime.

4. The last sign that your baby is ready to drop a nap is when keeping a relatively early bedtime becomes increasingly challenging. So if your baby is typically going to sleep between 7

and 730pm and keeping in that last nap means that his bedtime is now substantially later, it might mean that you should scrap that nap completely and replace it with an earlier bedtime.

Now here are three very important notes about nap transitions:

1. Firstly, don't transition to a new schedule too quickly. Your baby could be refusing a nap because of a regression instead, so make sure that this new naptime and duration isn't a temporary thing.
2. The second important point I want to make is that if you've established that your baby IS ready to drop a nap, implement an earlier bedtime at the beginning to avoid overtiredness while your baby adjusts to his new schedule.
3. And lastly, it's very normal during a transition for your baby's schedule to be different everyday. So for example, if your baby is in the thick of transitioning from 4 naps to 3, it's very normal for your baby to give you 3 naps on Monday and 4 naps on Tuesday, and for that pattern to continue for a couple of weeks! This drives type A moms up the wall! Just hang in there, try to take it day by day, and remember that this won't last forever.