



## Reasons for Early Morning Wake Ups

A baby waking early is one of the most common and most stubborn sleep issues. Babies and toddlers are prone to waking up early because they are easily cued by morning light and their internal clocks tell them to rise roughly with the sun. Additionally, melatonin production tends to decrease around 4am, so once your baby is up or stimulate it is easy for your little one to remain up for the day.

Below are the most common reasons for early morning wake ups:

1. Bedtime is too late
2. Chronic overtiredness
3. Working on a new milestone
4. Nap transition
5. Unnecessary early morning feeding
6. Too much day sleep
7. Bedtime is too early
8. Teething / Illness
9. You have a natural “morning” person
10. Timing of first nap
11. Room environment

So, what can you do? Treat any wake up before 6:00am as a night waking. Do your best to not go to them until 6:00am unless it's an emergency. Think of the end goal, do you want to continue to wake up early to watch Daniel the Tiger with your toddler, or do you want to continue to keep that 5:00am night feed that is lingering into your baby's 9 month?

Keep on reading about why these are the most common culprits to early morning rising and how you can possibly resolve it.

**#1 Bedtime is too late** – babies go to bed too late have a hard time transitioning through the light sleep stages. Try to put your little one to bed 15 – 30 minutes earlier to see if this will help with a later wake up. I know it sounds counterintuitive, but this works in most cases. It will take a full week to see if this has made a difference, so you cannot expect results in just 3 days.

**#2 Chronic overtiredness** – A baby that has really build up a sleep debt will wake up earlier until that debt has been paid back, even if bedtime is appropriate. At this point you should ensure

your little one is going to bed early temporarily to catch up on their sleep debt or contact a sleep consultant for more help.

#3 Working on a new milestone – milestone related sleep disturbances are temporary. You baby may wake early and practice (talking, crawling, rolling, etc.). The best thing to do is just not respond and know that should pass in a few weeks.

#4 Nap transitions – if your little one is around the age of a major nap transition then this could be the culprit. Start working on transitioning them and putting them to bed a little earlier while in transition. Believe it or not when your baby drops a nap his total wake time will go down slightly. It can take his body a few weeks to get adjusted to the larger wake windows and new sleep schedule.

#5 Unnecessary early morning feeding – if your baby is continuously waking at 5am, and you feed but they do not go back to sleep then there's a good chance that your baby didn't need that feeding. Continuing to feed your baby at that time will encourage that early wake up

#6 Too much day sleep – day sleep (naps) are crucial for your child's development along with balancing out their night sleep, but too much day sleep can take away from your baby's sleep bank causing an early morning rising. You may need to reach out to a sleep consultant to find out what the average amount of day sleep should be for your baby at their age.

#7 Bedtime too early. An early bedtime is BEFORE 6pm. It is great to do this when making up for a sleep debt, but if bedtime is too long, it can shift his schedule which will encourage the early wake up.

#8 Teething - While teething is often used as a scapegoat for night wakings, the most common sign of acute teething pain is an early morning wake up. If you are still night feeding, try dosing the Tylenol during the feeding which may help dull pain by the early morning. If your baby is still waking early after those teeth have erupted, chances are it is not teething causing the early waking.

#9 Your baby is a natural early riser – As much as you would like to have your baby sleep in to 7am, some babies are just natural early risers. They prefer to wake up at 6:00am and are clearly rested. You can try shifting their schedule by 15 minutes every few days, but their body may naturally be set to be an early morning person.

#10 Timing of your first nap – if your first nap is not timed right depending on your baby’s age, then it could be reinforcing the early morning wake ups. In this case you may want to shift your baby’s schedule out by 15 minutes every few days. It will take some experimenting

#11 Last but not least, room environment. Possibly the sun is beating in the room in the early morning hours, or your house gets chilly or too hot in the morning. This can affect your little one’s quality of sleep during these early morning hours since the drive to sleep isn’t as strong and they will be more sensitive to environment this early in the morning.

### Questions or need more help?

Contact me at [pediatricsleepcoach@gmail.com](mailto:pediatricsleepcoach@gmail.com) Be sure to follow me on Instagram at [the\\_sleepcoach!](https://www.instagram.com/the_sleepcoach/)



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