



Gradual Retreat

Gradual retreat is a gentle, responsive way to help your child learn to fall asleep independently, without suddenly removing your presence.

Instead of doing everything for them (rocking, feeding, lying with them), you slowly reduce how much support you give at bedtime, step by step. Think of it as teaching a new skill, not taking something away. You start by supporting your child to sleep in a new way, then gradually reduce your involvement over time.

STEP 1

Move from laying with them, rocking, patting, shushing etc to sitting in a chair next to the bed (rather than being in or on the bed). You are still there supporting them, but the physical contact is from the chair.

STEP 2

Start to reduce the interactions you are using to support them gradually, e.g. if you are cuddling them from the chair, use less pressure. If you are shushing, put longer gaps between the shushes or shush quieter. If you are just sat in the chair but not talking, then you can move to the next step.

STEP 3

Now your child only requires your presence in the room and no physical touch, start by moving your position in the chair further away every few nights. so night 4-6 you might be 1 meter away from the bed and then night 7-10 2 meters away.

STEP 4

You can then start leaving the room before the CYP has gone to sleep so they are settling entirely independently, if this is your goal.

