



# Turning your baby's crib into a Side Car



Little Village Sleep

## Side Car Crib

For some of us, transitioning our baby out of our bed or dealing with the nighttime battles of trying to get them back into their crib after feeds or overnight wakes can feel impossible. The first thing we need to accept is that our baby might not be ready for independence yet and that's ok. There should never be a timeline on when your baby is ready for independent sleep. This happens at different ages for different babies and can take even longer for highly sensitive or spirited babies. Remember that your child's sleep and their desire to be independent is out of your control and the more you try and push the more they will push back.

So what can you do if you're ready for your baby to be out of your bed but you are tired of being up all night trying to get them into their crib? One of my FAVOURITE strategies to use is turning their crib into a side car crib safely. If your baby's crib has one side that comes off, you can attach it to the side of your bed. This allows your baby to practice falling asleep in their crib while still being next to you. It's perfect for giving each of you your own sleep space, creating a sleep space that's safe for your child and allows you to pull them into your bed for a cuddle or overnight feeds without either of you needing to get out of bed.

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# Attaching a side car crib to your bed

1. Remove the side of your baby's crib that needs to attach to the side of your bed.
2. Your baby's crib mattress should be level with your mattress. Depending on the height of your bed will determine which setting you have their crib mattress on.
3. NOTE: You can always put your mattress on the floor if your beds do not line up properly (this strategy needs to be done as safely as possible)
4. Using zip ties, straps or bungee cords. You'll want to secure your child's crib to your bed so it can't move away and cause a gap between the mattress and the crib.
5. Push your child's mattress against your's leaving a gap where the mattress meets the crib. You can use a pool noodle to fill in the space and use a slightly larger sheet to cover both the mattress and the pool noodle or rolled up blanket to fill in the space.
6. Lay a blanket or sheet over the mini gap between your mattress and your baby's tucking it in place.
7. IMPORTANT! You want to make sure all gaps are filled and your baby cannot get wedged between the mattress and crib side, and there is no gap between the mattress and the crib!!!

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Allowing your baby more time to be close to you overnight while also giving the two of you your own sleep surfaces can benefit everyone by getting you all more sleep while you navigate a challenging season.

New parents who want to bed share but in the safest way possible. I will suggest this strategy from day one.

Regardless of what age you start, when you feel like they are ready, start by putting the railing back up but keep the crib beside your bed. This way they still have the comfort of being next to you without the option to access you.

You know your baby best, take the rail back down if it stresses either of you out and try again in a week or two. The idea is slowly transitioning them further and further away until you are both ready to move the crib into their own room. There should never be a timeline on this, just a slow progression to moving your child closer and closer to independence when they are ready to do so. It never hurts to try, listen, observe and do what feels right. Sometimes sleep can feel like two steps forward one step back, especially during developmental milestones.

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Depending on your child's temperament the move into their own room can also feel like a shove. Setting a floor bed up for yourself beside their crib can help them feel comfortable in their new sleep space while also allowing you to respond right away avoiding a full wake up and the power struggle back into the crib. You can also refer to my guide 'Moving your child into their own sleep space' for tips and strategies to make this transition go smoothly.

The idea is to slowly remove yourself from the room more and more until your baby is comfortable staying in there without you. You are teaching them you will always return when and if they need you.

The last option is to skip the crib all together and move your child onto a queen sized floor bed and do the transition with them. You will need to baby proof their entire room if your baby is older and mobile. You always want their sleep space to be as safe as possible.

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