



How to Get Your Toddler to Stop Using a Pacifier

If you're like most parents, you've probably been slightly panicked about getting rid of your kid's paci since... the first time they started using one.

Pacifiers are MAGICAL, aren't they? They transform fussy, cranky, wailing babes into sweet, happy, self-soothers.

But even as our little ones are happily sucking away on their paci, we parents can't help but imagine the horror of getting rid of that thing—for good.

I've been there. (Hi - Kristin here! 🙋) My daughter slept with 15 pacis scattered around her crib. (That's not a typo, you guys. FIFTEEN PACIS.) When she fell asleep at night, she'd have one in her mouth and two in each hand.

I was SO worried about taking the paci away for SO long... but SURPRISE! It ended up being a super smooth transition. In fact, I had bigger feelings about saying "bye bye" to the pacifiers than she did!

No matter what age your kid is, there is absolutely **no need to dread** the “some day” when you’ll have to take away the paci. *For real. Keep reading.*

When should my child stop using a pacifier?

While many dentists suggest that between the ages of 2 and 3 is the best time to ditch the paci, you should ***absolutely*** discuss this topic with your pediatrician or dentist, and **align on a plan that's right for YOU!**

☀ If your little one is younger than the “bye bye paci” age you decide on, bookmark this page, and come back when you’re ready. Release all that unnecessary worry and guilt! Remind yourself how good pacifiers are!

☀ If your little one IS the appropriate age to say “bye bye” to their paci, and if you're ready to say “bye bye”, this five-step strategy will help.

Ps - Looking for a super detailed how-to guide for saying “bye bye” to the paci? Our course has exaaaaactly that. **Get the course [here!](#)**





Five Steps to Wean Off Pacifiers

STEP 1

The Wean Phase

For a few weeks—or even a few months—transition to keeping pacifiers for naps and bedtime only. (Read: remove the paci during playtime, and stop packing pacis when you leave the house.) If your kid's *really* in love with their paci, this may feel impossible, but you'll be surprised by how quickly they adjust.

STEP 2

PREP

You'll want to get your toddler familiar with the concept of saying, "bye bye paci" ahead of time. That way the idea will be less scary and more familiar—and you'll be set up for a smooth transition.

Two or three weeks ahead of time, start reading books about saying goodbye to the pacifier. Books help your little one become accustomed to the idea of being without a paci, and they get a chance to see other kids going through the process.

(Ps - PREP works for *any* new, scary, uncomfortable situation - like getting a flu shot at the doctor, going to a new school, or their first visit to the dentist. Our online course gives you alllllll the details on PREP, including specific how-tos. It's a game changer. **Get the [course here!](#)**)



STEP 3

Introduce the Paci Fairy

The **Paci Fairy** comes to your house to swap pacifiers for a gift and a celebration for your little one.

On the day Paci Fairy comes, you'll put your toddler in charge of something, so they'll feel in control and power—like getting rid of their pacifier was **THEIR IDEA ALL ALONG**. They'll get to gather up all the pacifiers, put them in an envelope they decorated themselves and leave the package on your porch for the Fairy to pick up.

But—**AND THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT—don't wait until the day-of to spring this whole idea on your kiddo!** Instead, prep them ahead of time so they understand the concept and know exactly what to expect.

When you do this, be as detailed and specific as possible. In fact, if you think you're going overboard with the specifics, add even **MORE** details.



Why? Because when our toddlers know what's coming and what they can expect to happen, they feel safe. Feeling safe is crucial for being open to the unknown—and life without a paci is certainly an unknown for your toddler! The more you paint the picture of what will happen, the more they can settle into the process and go with the flow—which means a smoother transition for everyone.

Explaining the details of the Paci Fairy's visit might sound like this:

"The Paci Fairy will soon visit our house!
Here's what we'll do for her visit: We will get a big envelope and put all the Pacis in it.
Then, in the morning, she will leave you a special present. It'll be a party!"

Don't skimp on the party. Think confetti and sparkles. Throw the word *cake* in there if you REALLY want to take this to the next level. Toddlers (humans in general) just.love.cake.

If your child seems upset about giving up their paci, affirm their feelings and point back to the books you've been reading:

“It sounds like you're excited for the Paci Fairy to come, and you're also feeling sad about your pacifiers. It's okay to feel sad. Remember what the little boy/girl did in our books when they felt sad about it? Yes! They hugged their stuffy really tight.”

Want more details on the Paci Fairy - like how to pick the date with your little one, and what to do on the big day? Our online course, *Winning the Toddler Stage*, tells you allllll those things - and lots lots lots more. **Get the course [here!](#)**



STEP 4

Pick your Paci Fairy date

Pick a day on the calendar for the Paci Fairy to come, and have your little one circle that day on your family calendar so everyone can see it. It can sound like this:

“Okay! On this day, the Paci Fairy will come to our house. How about YOU circle the day, and then each day as we get closer, you’ll put a big X on our calendar.”

Putting your toddler in charge of checking off the days as you get closer makes it feel like their process. As the day approaches, keep reading those prep books and talking about the Paci Fairy’s visit.

STEP 5

It’s Paci Fairy day!

On Paci Fairy day, let your child use the paci for their nap so they’re rested up for their big day. Then, in the afternoon, have your child do exactly what you’ve been prepping them for: decorate a large envelope (think markers or stickers), collect their pacis and put them in the envelope, and leave the package on your porch.

Giving your child some age-appropriate power by letting *them* be the one to decorate, collect pacis, and leave the package can make a huge difference!

Although you’ve been talking about the Paci Fairy’s visit a lot recently, remind your little one of the details once again:

“Tonight, the Paci Fairy will come and leave you a biiiiiig present for you to find in the morning! Bye bye pacis!”

After your child goes to sleep, cover your porch in confetti, leaving an exciting toy in place of the pacis. And again: Make it a party! This is a big milestone! We're celebrating!

What should I do when my child is sad about missing their paci?



Swapping your child's pacis for a physical gift isn't a bribe. It's to ensure your little one has an actual item to hold if they feel sad about their pacifiers being gone. In other words, it's a helpful coping strategy.

In the moment, comfort your child by acknowledging their feelings:

“I hear you're missing your paci.
You're feeling sad, and it's okay to feel sad.
When you get sad, you can hug your lovie.”

Allow those feelings to flow. Letting your child release their emotions, and even cry, is healthy!

Then, once you've acknowledged their feelings, remind them of the coping skills they learned about in their prep books, like:



Holding and hugging their lovie.



Drawing a picture of their feelings.



Blowing bubbles (pretend is okay).



Pacifiers are dreamy.

Saying “bye bye” to them doesn’t have to be a nightmare. You’ve got this, warrior parents!

BTW, we know getting rid of a pacifier is only one of A HUNDRED MILLION BILLION challenges that come with parenting a toddler. Some days, it feels like everything’s a fight - mealtime, bedtime, bath time, screen-time, alllllll the time! **That’s why we created our online course, *Winning the Toddler Stage***. If you’re at your wit’s end (or you want to avoid getting there), our course will help you put a stop to power struggles, manage meltdowns like a boss, and get back to enjoying your kid again. **Get the course [here](#)!**