The clocks go back the morning after Halloween: easing kids onto the new time

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US clocks go back at 2 a.m. on Sunday 1 November 2026, right after Halloween night. A plan for the late night, the early wake-up and the week after.

In most of the United States, the clocks go back one hour at 2 a.m. on Sunday 1 November 2026, the night of Halloween. So the latest night of the year, full of candy, ends with an extra hour, and a lot of children will be wide awake at what the clock now calls 5:30. The good news is that the adjustment is short. The plan below is the "weekend of" method from Connecticut Children's sleep team, fitted around Halloween night.

I'm a parent who built Peabody, a free reading and math site for kids. Our kids' bedtimes are the one thing in the house that runs on a clock, and this year the time change lands on the same night as trick-or-treating, so I wrote down what we're doing.

When exactly it happens

- The United States: 2 a.m. on Sunday 1 November 2026 becomes 1 a.m. Most of Arizona and all of Hawaii don't change their clocks.
- Most of Canada changes the same night.
- The UK and most of Europe went back a week earlier, on Sunday 25 October, so if you're there, the week of adjusting is already behind you.

Phones and computers change by themselves. Oven clocks, car clocks and the clock on the bedroom wall don't, and a child who can read the wall clock will notice.

Saturday: Halloween night

There's no point fighting Halloween. Go trick-or-treating, come home, sort the candy, read one short story and go to bed. Two small things make Sunday easier:

1. Pick the bedtime treat before you go. A child who knows "two pieces when we get home, the rest in the morning" isn't negotiating at 8:45 with a full bag in hand.
2. Change the clocks after they're asleep. Connecticut Children's says to do it on Saturday night, once your child is in bed, so the house is on the new time when they wake up.

Sunday: the early wake-up

Your child's body still thinks it's an hour later, so expect them up early by the clock. That's the morning to set the new time:

- Get them up at the time they'll need to get up on Monday, not earlier and not later.

- Get outside in daylight for 30 to 60 minutes soon after, even a short walk or breakfast on the step. Connecticut Children's explains that morning light tells the brain it's time to be awake and sets the body clock for the next day.
- Do everything at the new time: meals, snacks, naps for little ones.
- Put them to bed at their normal time on the new clock, with the usual routine: bath, teeth, story, lights out.

Halloween candy and Sunday don't need to fight each other. A couple of pieces after lunch, none in the hour before bed, and an early bath if the afternoon gets wobbly.

The week after

Connecticut Children's says it takes about a week for a child to adjust, and to be patient with some moodiness in the meantime. A few things keep that week short:

- Keep wake-up times steady, weekends included. Sleeping in more than an hour or so on a weekend makes Sunday night harder.
- Morning light, every morning. Open the curtains, eat breakfast near a window, walk to school if you can.
- Dark bedroom, early evening. Sunset comes an hour earlier by the clock now. Blackout curtains help a child who wakes at first light.
- The same routine each night. The routine is the signal, more than the clock.

For a toddler who wakes at 5:30 and won't go back down, a dim room, quiet toys and no screens until the new wake time is about all you can do. It usually settles within the week.

If you'd rather do it gradually

Connecticut Children's gives a second method, for families who like to start early: in the week before the change, push bedtime later by 15 minutes every night or two, so a child who goes to bed at 8 is going to bed at 9 by Saturday, which becomes 8 again when the clocks go back. Shift wake-ups and naps too. If you're reading this on Halloween, the weekend method is the one for this year; put a note in the calendar for next October.

Bedtime stories on the new time

A story is the easiest part of a bedtime routine to keep the same when everything else moves. The short bedtime stories take five minutes or so to read, and the library has stories for every reading level, from first books up. Peabody Timers has a bedtime routine board, a picture and a timer for each step, for the child who wants to see what comes next.

Questions grown-ups ask

When do the clocks go back in 2026?

In the US, at 2 a.m. on Sunday 1 November 2026, the night of Halloween. Clocks go back one hour, to 1 a.m. Most of Arizona and Hawaii don't change. The UK and most of Europe changed on 25 October.

How long does it take a child to adjust to the time change?

About a week, according to Connecticut Children's. Steady wake-up times and morning daylight keep it short.

Should I keep my child up later on Halloween because of the time change?

Halloween night is late anyway, and that's fine. The part that matters is Sunday: get them up at their normal school-day time on the new clock, get outside in the morning, and put them to bed at the normal time.

Does the time change matter for babies and toddlers?

Little ones tend to notice it most, because they wake with the light. Move naps and meals to the new clock on Sunday, keep the bedroom dark in the morning, and expect the early wake-ups to settle within the week.

The advice here comes from Connecticut Children's sleep team. Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up to read.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/clocks-go-back-the-morning-after-halloween