

American Academy of Pediatrics

CHOOSING A CRIB

As you look at a crib, make sure you check the following, especially if you choose a used crib that may have been built before current crib safety standards were set.

- When purchasing a crib, look for Juvenile Product Manufacturers Association (JPMA) certification.
- The slats should be no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. Widely spaced slats can trap an infant's head.
- All joints and parts should fit tightly, and the wood must be smooth and free of splinters.
- Check for cracked and peeling paint. All surfaces should be covered with lead-free paint safe for nursery furniture.
- The end panels should be solid, without decorative cutouts. Cutout areas on panels can trap an infant's head.
- Corner posts should be flush with the end panels or else be very, very tall (such as posts on a canopy bed). Clothing and ribbons can catch on tall corner posts and strangle an infant.
- The lowered crib sides should be at least 9 inches above the mattress support to prevent the infant from falling out. Raised crib sides should be at least 26 inches above the mattress support in its lowest position.
- The drop sides should have a locking, hand-operated latch that will not release unintentionally.
- The mattress should be the same size as the crib so there are no gaps to trap arms, body, or legs. If you can fit 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib, the crib should not be used.

USING A CRIB

- Read the directions to set up, use, and care for the crib.
- Never use a crib with loose or missing attachments or support hardware.
- Never leave the crib sides down when the baby is in the crib.
- Hanging crib toys (mobiles, crib gyms) should be out of the baby's reach. Any hanging crib toy must be removed when your baby first begins to push up on his or her hands and knees or when the baby is 5 months old, whichever occurs first. These toys can strangle a baby.
- If bumper pads are used, remove them when the baby begins to stand so that they can't be used as steps.
- The crib mattress should be lowered before the baby can sit alone. The mattress should be at its lowest point before the baby can stand.
- Children should be taken out of a crib by the time they are 35 inches tall.
- Never place a crib near cords from a hanging window blind or drapery. Children can get caught in the cords and strangle.
- Be sure to inspect every crib your child uses for safety - those at the grandparent's home, the baby-sitter's home, or the child care center.
- Hammocks and other swinging devices should not be installed onto a crib because the baby may be strangled.
- If parts are missing, contact the crib manufacturer for replacement hardware.

SAFE BEDDING PRACTICES FOR INFANTS

- Place baby on his or her back on a firm tight-fitting mattress in a crib that meets current safety standards.
- Remove pillows, pillow-like bumper pads, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft products from the crib.
- Consider using a sleeper or other sleep clothing as an alternative to blankets, with no other covering.
- If using a blanket, put baby with feet at the foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the baby's chest.
- Make sure your baby's head remains uncovered during sleep.
- Do not place baby on a water bed, sofa, soft mattress, pillow, or other soft surface.

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

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