

Crib Safety in Child Care Programs

CHECK CRIBS FOR SAFETY

- Make sure cribs meet current national safety standards and are in good condition. Look for a certification safety seal meeting the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM).
- Cribs should be made of wood, metal or plastic and have secure latching devices.
- Crib slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches (about the width of a soda can) apart with no missing or cracked slats.
- Use a firm, tight-fitting mattress so that no more than two fingers can fit between the mattress and the crib side in the lowest position.
- Make sure there are no missing, loose, broken or improperly installed screws, brackets, or other hardware on the crib or mattress support. All crib hardware should be securely tightened and checked regularly.
- The minimum height from the top of the mattress to the top of the crib rail should be 20 inches in the highest position. Drop side latches should securely hold sides in the raised position, and the child in the crib should not be able to reach them. Cribs should not be used with the drop side down.
- Corner posts should not be over 1/16 inch high.
- There should be no cutouts in the headboard or foot board that might trap a baby's head.
- The mattress support system should not be easily dislodged from any point of the crib by an upward force from underneath the crib.

USING CRIBS SAFELY

- Infants under 12 months of age should be placed on their backs in a crib with a firm, tight-fitting mattress.
- Use only a fitted bottom sheet specifically made for crib use. No pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, pillow-like bedding or stuffed toys should be used in the crib.
- If a blanket is used, the infant should be placed with feet to the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress reaching only as far as the infant's chest.

Sources: Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards (nrc.uchsc.edu), U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov), Pennsylvania Act 39 of 2000 (Infant Crib Safety Act) and Pennsylvania Code Title 55—Chapter 3270.106, Chapter 3280.105, Chapter 3290.105.

