Baby Products and Equipment

From the beginning of a child’s life, products such as cribs, highchairs and other nursery equipment must be selected with safety in mind. Parents and caretakers of babies and young children need to be aware of the many potential hazards in their environment—hazards occurring through misuse of products, or those involving products that have not been well-designed for use by children.

This checklist is a safety guide to help you when buying new or secondhand nursery equipment, or when evaluating equipment in your home or child care facility. Ask yourself: Does the equipment have the safety features in this checklist? If not, can missing or unsafe parts be easily replaced with the proper parts? Can breaks or cracks be repaired to increase the safety of the product? Can I fix the older equipment without creating a “new” hazard?

If most of your answers are “No,” the equipment is beyond repair and should be discarded. If the equipment can be reused, be sure it is properly repaired before the child uses it.

Please note that this guide offers information on common nursery equipment only. If you have additional concerns that are not addressed, or a question about a product not listed here, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission using the information at the end of this guide.

Nursery Equipment Safety Checklist: What to Look For

Back Carriers
- Carrier has a restraining strap to secure the child.
- Leg openings are small enough to prevent the child from slipping out.
- Leg openings are large enough to prevent chafing.
- Frames have no pinch points in the folding mechanism.
- Carrier has padded covering over metal frame near the baby’s face.

Safety Tip
- Do not use a back carrier until the baby is four or five months old. By then, the baby’s neck is able to withstand jolts and not sustain an injury.

Bassinets and Cradles
- Bassinet/cradle has a sturdy bottom and a wide base for stability.
- Bassinet/cradle has smooth surfaces—no protruding staples, nails or other hardware that could injure the baby.
- Legs have strong, effective locks to prevent folding while in use.
- Mattress is firm and fits snugly.

Safety Tips
- Follow the manufacturer’s guidelines concerning the weight and size requirements for babies who can safely use these products.
- Do not use a basket that is not intended to be a bassinet. Any loose wicker could harm your baby.

Baby Bath Rings or Seats
- Suction cups are securely fastened to product.

Safety Tips
- Make sure suction cups are securely attached to SMOOTH SURFACES of the tub.
- NEVER leave a baby unattended or with a sibling in a tub of water. Do not rely on a bath ring to keep your baby safe.
- When bathing your baby, fill the tub with only enough water to cover the baby’s legs.
• Test to make sure the water temperature is not too hot (or cold) before putting your baby in the tub.

Carrier Seats

- Carrier seat has a wide sturdy base for stability.
- Carrier seat has non-skid feet to prevent slipping.
- Supporting devices lock securely.
- Carrier seat has crotch and waist straps.
- Buckle or strap is easy to use.

Safety Tip

• Never use the carrier as a car seat.

Changing Tables

- Table has safety straps to prevent falls.
- Table has drawers or shelves that are easily accessible so the baby is not left unattended.

Safety Tips

• Do not leave a baby on the table unattended. Always use the straps to prevent the baby from falling.
• Keep changing supplies and diaper pail out of the baby’s reach.

Crib

- Slats are spaced no more than 2 3/8 inches (60 mm) apart.
- No slats are missing or cracked.
- Mattress fits snugly—less than two fingers’ width between edge of mattress and crib side.
- Mattress support is securely attached to the head- and footboards.
- Corner posts are no higher than 1/16 inch (1½ mm) to prevent entanglement of clothing or other objects worn by a child.
- Crib has no cutouts in the head- and footboards, which allow head entrapment.
- Drop-side latches cannot be easily released by a baby.
- Drop-side latches securely hold sides in raised position.
- All screws or bolts that secure components of crib are present and tight.
- Paint or finish is non-toxic.

New Crib Safety Standards

Beginning June 28, 2011, all cribs manufactured and sold (including resale) must comply with new and improved federal safety standards. These standards prohibit the manufacture or sale of traditional drop-side rail cribs, require crib mattress support, slats, and hardware to be more durable and require manufacturers to test to new more stringent requirements to prove compliance. By December 28, 2012, child care centers and places of public accommodation must use only compliant cribs that meet the new federal safety standards.

If you are unable to purchase a new crib and continue to use your current crib, the CPSC recommends:

- Check CPSC’s crib recall list to make sure that your crib has not been recalled.
- Check the crib frequently to make sure all of the hardware is secured tightly and that there are no loose, missing, or broken parts.
- If your crib has a drop-side rail, stop using that drop-side function. Request a free immobilizer from the manufacturer or retailer (particular immobilizer will vary depending on the crib).
- Another option is to use a portable play yard, so long as it is not a model that has been recalled previously.

Safety Tips

- Do not place crib near draperies or blinds where a child could become entangled and strangle on cords.
- When the child reaches 35 inches in height or can climb and/or fall over the sides, the crib should be replaced with a bed.
- Use a bumper pad that has at least six ties so that it fits snugly around the perimeter of the crib. The ties should be less than 12 inches long to avoid strangulation.
- As soon as your child can stand in the crib, remove bumpers so your child cannot use them to get out of the crib.
Crib Toys
- Crib toys have no strings with loops, and openings having perimeters greater than 14 inches (356 mm).
- Crib toys have no strings or cords longer than 7 inches (178 mm) that can dangle into the crib.
- Crib gym has warning label recommending removal from crib when child can push up on hands and knees or reaches five months of age, whichever comes first. (Clearly visible warnings are important reminders for parents and other caregivers.)
- Components of toys are not small enough to be a choking hazard.

Safety Tip
- Avoid hanging toys across the crib or on crib corner posts if they have strings long enough to result in strangulation.

Gates and Closures
- Openings in gate and along top edge are too small to entrap a child’s head.
- Gate has a pressure bar or other fastener that will resist forces exerted by a child.

Safety Tip
- To avoid head entrapment, do not use accordion-style gates or expandable enclosures with large v-shaped openings along the top edge, or diamond-shaped openings within.

Highchairs
- Highchair has waist and crotch restraining straps that are independent of the tray.
- Tray locks securely.
- Buckle on waist strap is easy to use.
- Highchair has a wide stable base.
- Caps or plugs on tubing are firmly attached and cannot be pulled off and pose a choking hazard.
- Folding highchairs have an effective locking device to prevent collapse.

Safety Tip
- Always use restraining straps to prevent a child from sliding under the tray and strangling.

Hook-On Chairs
- Chair has a restraining strap to secure the child.
- Chair has a clamp that locks onto the table for added security.
- Caps or plugs on tubing are firmly attached and cannot be pulled off and choke a child.
- Hook-on chair has a warning never to place the chair where the child can push off with feet. (Clearly visible warnings are important reminders for parents and other caregivers.)

Safety Tip
- Don’t leave a child unattended in a hook-on chair.

Pacifiers
- Pacifier has no ribbon, string, cord or yarn attached to it.
- Guard or shield is large enough and firm enough to not fit in the child’s mouth.
- Guard or shield has ventilation holes so the baby can breathe if the shield does get into the mouth.
- Pacifier nipple has no holes or tears that might cause it to break off in the baby’s mouth.

Safety Tip
- To prevent strangulation, never hang a pacifier or other items on a string around a baby’s neck.

Playpens
- Drop-side mesh playpen or crib has label warning never to leave side in the down position. (Clearly visible warnings are important reminders for parents and other caregivers.)
- Mesh has a small weave (less than ¼ inch openings).
- Mesh has no tears, holes or loose threads.
- Mesh is securely attached to top rail and floorplate.
- Top rail cover has no tears or holes.
- Wooden playpen has slats spaced no more than 2 3/8 inches (60 mm) apart.
- If staples are used in construction, they are firmly installed and none are missing or loose.

Safety Tips
- Never leave an infant in a mesh playpen or crib with a drop-side down. Even a very young infant can roll into the space between the mattress and the loose mesh side and suffocate.
- Never leave a child in a playpen all day.
- Make sure the child cannot lower the side of the playpen or climb over the top.
Rattles, Squeeze Toys, Teethers

- Rattles, squeeze toys and teethers are too large to wholly fit in a child’s mouth.
- Rattles are of sturdy construction that will not break apart in use.
- Squeeze toys do not contain a squeaker or other small objects that could detach and choke a baby.

**Safety Tip**

- Take rattles, squeeze toys and other toys out of the crib or playpen when the baby sleeps to prevent choking or suffocation.

Strollers and Carriages

- Base is wide to prevent tipping.
- Seat belt and crotch strap are securely attached to the frame.
- Seat belt buckle is easy to use.
- Brakes securely lock the wheel(s).
- Shopping basket is low on the back or in front of rear wheels for stability.
- When used in carriage position, leg hole openings can be closed.

**Safety Tips**

- Always secure the seat belts.
- Never leave a child unattached or unattended in a stroller.
- Keep children's hands away from pinching areas when stroller is being folded or unfolded or the seat back is being reclined.

Toy Chests

- Toy chest has no lid latch that could entrap a child within the toy chest.
- Hinged lid has a spring-loaded lid support that will support the lid in any position and will not require periodic adjustment.
- Chest has ventilation holes or spaces in front or sides, or under the lid should a child get inside.

**Safety Tip**

- If you already own a toy chest or trunk with a freely falling lid, remove the lid to avoid head injury to a small child, or install a spring-loaded lid support.

Walkers

- Wheel base is wide for stability.
- Coil springs have covers to avoid finger pinching.
- Seat is securely attached to frame of walker.
- Walkers have no x-frames that could pinch or amputate fingers.

**Safety Tips**

- Place gates or guards at the top of all stairways, or keep stairway doors closed to prevent falls.
- Always supervise your child while he or she is in the walker.
- Use on smooth surfaces.
- Pull off or throw away plastic labels and decals to prevent choking.

**A Note About the Consumer Product Safety Commission**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent federal regulatory agency that sets and enforces safety standards for consumer products. The Commission also conducts independent research and provides the public with safety information and guidelines. To report a product hazard or a product-related injury, write to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814, visit www.cpsc.gov on the Internet or call the toll-free hotline: 800-638-2772 (TTY 800-638-8270).

For more information on related topics, please consult other publications in our education series.