



## Is Your Baby's Crib or Playpen or Safe?

A safe crib or playpen is the best place to put your baby to sleep; however, both can be very dangerous if safety guidelines are not followed! Babies can suffocate or strangle to death when they become trapped between broken or unsafe parts.

If you are purchasing a new crib, playpen or playard, look for the certification seal showing that it meets national safety standards. Contact CPSC at (800) 638-2772 or [www.cpsc.gov/cribs](http://www.cpsc.gov/cribs) for more details.

If you are using an older crib or playpen, check it against the guidelines below. If it does not meet the standards, destroy it and replace it with a safe one. CPSC staff recommends that you not use a crib that is more than 10 years old.

Place baby on his back to sleep unless directed to do otherwise by your health care provider.

### **Safe crib and/or playpens have:**

- Mesh-netting with a very small weave - smaller than the tiny buttons on your baby's clothing.
- A firm, snug-fitting mattress or pad so your baby cannot get trapped between the mattress and the side of the crib or playpen/playard.
- Correctly-fitting sheets.
- No missing, loose, broken, or improperly installed screws, brackets, or other hardware.
- No more than 2 3/8 inches between crib slats. This is about the width of a soda can.
- No fluffy blankets, comforters, pillows, sheepskins or stuffed animals that could trap your baby and suffocate him.
- No corner posts over 1/16 inch above the end panels (unless they are high and the tops are out of reach of a child, for example when a canopy is used). A baby's head or clothing can get trapped otherwise.
- No cracked or peeling paint.
- No splinters or rough edges.
- No split or chipping plastic or vinyl.
- No torn mesh. No loose threads. Mesh secured to the top rail and floor plate.
- No cutout designs in the headboard or footboard.
- Top rail with no tears or holes.
- Secured staples.

Remember, as your baby grows, the crib may need some adjusting (lower the mattress, move away from blinds, etc.).

Do not use cribs with drop-down sides, or install an immobilizer recommended by the crib manufacturer.

Consider dressing your baby in a sleeper instead of using a blanket. If you do use a blanket, place your baby with his feet toward the foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, covering baby only as high as his chest.

For more information, contact the Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health at (336) 641-7777 or [www.myguilford.com](http://www.myguilford.com) or visit [www.nichd.nih.gov/sids](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids) and search Safe to Sleep.