

Setting up a Safe Nursery

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Setting up your nursery for your new baby's arrival is an exciting time for parents but it can be really hard to know where to begin.

Red Nose Chief Midwife Jane Wiggill has put together some tips on how you can make safe choices when purchasing items, so you can rest easy, knowing your baby is as safe as they can possibly be.

1. Purchase equipment that meets Australian Safety Standards:

The safest place to sleep your baby is in a cot or in a travel cot because all new and pre-loved cots and travel cots sold in Australia must meet the current Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS 2172) and AS/NZS 2195). Look for a label or sticker that says that it complies with the mandatory standard and when in doubt, ask! Never place your baby in a cot or travel cot that does not meet these standards.

2. Purchase the basics – babies don't need a lot to get started!

Make sure that when you are looking to make purchases for baby, think about simplicity.

Babies don't need fancy equipment to keep them safe, but they do need the correct equipment to be used in a way they were intended.

For example, when parents are looking to purchase a sleep space for baby, purchase a cot or a travel cot. Don't forget to grab some safe lightweight bedding while you're at it, some muslin or cotton wraps and some safe sleep bags. Safer sleep bags allow baby's arms to be free (even for newborns), fit well and have no hoods or head coverings. If you're thinking about car and travel, purchase a pram and a car restraint. Want to add a change table? Go for it! Just remember to always use your equipment in a safe way – the way they were designed to be used.

Never leave babies unattended in prams, bouncers, car seats, capsules or any other inclined device. None of these devices were designed as dedicated sleep spaces and are dangerous for baby if left alone for even short periods of time.

3. Don't add any unnecessary and unsafe items in or around the cot

With the seemingly endless stream of new products on the market that make enticing claims (many unsubstantiated) about safety, comfort and restoration of long lost sleep for parents, it can be very tempting to make purchases to add to your baby's sleep space.

Remember, the safest way to sleep baby is on their back in a cot or a travel cot on a safe mattress with safe bedding, free of mobiles, pillows (of any kind), bumpers, lambswool, nests, positioners or thick loose bedding, even if the child is older than twelve months of age. Adding items to the sleep space adds risk to your baby's airway.

4. Look up, Look down, Look all around

Have a look, are there any hanging cords, blinds, clocks or wall hangings such as bunting, pictures or canopies that could pose a danger to your baby or child? Ensure the cot is moved right away from these hazards with any loose cords securely fastened to prevent accidental strangulation or asphyxiation.

Another important thing to think about is ensuring furniture such as shelving or drawers are positioned away from the cot and secured to the wall or floor to prevent accidental tipping. You can purchase wonderful products that help to ensure that drawers remain in place and little fingers can't get trapped.

If you have older children, this is especially important as there is still a risk of slips, trips and falls in this age group.

Follow our other tips for a safer nursery setting

- Choose a cot or a travel cot that meets Australian and New Zealand Standards for Safety.
- Use a firm, well-fitted clean mattress with no rips or tears.
- Use simple and safe bedding - lightweight and made from breathable fabrics.
- Safer Sleep bags are well fitted across the chest and neck, allow baby to have access to their arms and have no hoods or head coverings. They are great for all ages – even newborns.
- Never place additional items in or around the cot, such as mobiles, pillows (of any kind), bumpers, lambswool, nests, positioners or thick loose bedding, even if the advertising looks enticing.
- Call Red Nose Safe Sleep Advice Line 1300 998 698 for more information or visit: www.rednose.org.au

