

Nursery Safety Checklist

You should survey your nursery regularly to make sure it remains a safe place for children. Experts recommend doing this at least twice a year. Use this checklist to help you.

Cribs

- Look for loose or missing slats.
- Make sure slats are no more than 23/8 inches apart to prevent head entrapment.
- Remove decorative knobs on corner posts that could entangle clothing.
- Use a tight-fitting mattress. You should be able to fit only two fingers between the mattress and the crib side.
- Tighten loose nuts, screws, and bolts.
- Make sure mattress supports are secure.

Playpens

- Make sure the mesh netting has a fine weave, so it won't catch the buttons on children's clothing.
- Inspect the mesh to make sure there are no tears, holes, or loose threads.
- Place a warning label on drop-side mesh playpens reminding workers never to leave children in the pen with the side down.
- Make sure slat spaces on a wooden playpen are no more than 23/8 inches apart.

High chairs

- Check to see that the high chair has a wide, stable base that won't collapse easily.
- Make sure it has functional waist and crotch restraining straps.
- Ensure that the high chair tray locks securely.
- Firmly attach tubing caps or plugs that a child could pull off and swallow.

Toys

- Make sure none of the toys in the room can cause children under age 3 to choke or suffocate. These include:
 - Toys with small parts
 - Fuzzy stuffed animals or dolls
 - Balloons (Uninflated, they pose a choking hazard)
 - Foam toys

Floors

- Get on your hands and knees to survey the nursery areas from a child's perspective.
- Make sure the floor stays free of small objects a child could swallow, such as coins, paper clips, or buttons.
- Eliminate any falling or tripping hazards.

Doors

- Place locks or latches on doors that children could open.
- Consider using half doors to prevent children from wandering off while providing visibility.

Walls

- Remove tacks and pins from areas of bulletin boards children can reach.
- Cover electrical outlets.
- Repair peeling wallpaper or chipped paint.
- Secure drapery or window-treatment cords.

Ceiling

- Make sure ceiling tiles are firmly in place.
- Remove any loose plaster from textured ceilings.

Furnishings

- Don't stack furniture or toys so that a child would find them inviting to climb.
- Install gates on stairwells accessible to children.
- Make sure all electrical cords are out of reach, especially those attached to hot objects.
- Don't use hot appliances, such as space heaters or coffee makers.
- Secure shelves and furniture, so kids cannot pull them over.
- Pad any sharp corners or edges.
- Remove any poisonous plants. Place non-toxic plants out of arm's reach.

Supplies

- Store cleaning and diaper-changing supplies out of children's reach or in latched cabinets.
- Use only non-toxic paint, crayons, and other art supplies.
- Don't allow children to play on or around carts holding TVs or audiovisual equipment.

Emergency Safety

- Make sure the room contains a stocked first aid kit.
- Post important phone numbers, such as those for the local poison control center and nearest hospital emergency room, near the phone. If there's no phone in the room, provide the location of the nearest telephone.
- Install a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector.
- Hang a fire extinguisher out of children's reach.
- Post disaster response instructions and a map to the nearest exit.