



Parenting

Your child's bedroom:

A make-it-safe guide, for babies on up

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The nursery

The crib

- If it's a hand-me-down or used, make sure there are no missing or loose slats, screws, or brackets and that the crib is free of splinters, cracks, and peeling paint.
- Choose a 5m mattress that fits snugly, with no more than a two-5mger width between it and the crib sides. Any bumper should be tied or snapped securely, top and bottom, all the way around.
- Use a crib sheet—not one made for a bed—that fits tightly under and around the mattress. If you tug on it, it should stay on.
- Slats should be no more than $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches apart; corner posts, no higher than $\frac{1}{16}$ inch above the head- and foot-boards. (Exception: a canopy crib with tall posts.) Skip decorative cutouts on end panels—your baby's hands or head could get trapped.



The changing table

- Select a stand-alone table; it's more stable than traylike models that attach to dressers.
- The side rails should be at least 2 inches above the changing pad, with straps to secure your baby (use 'em!).
- Stow diaper-changing supplies close by so you can stay near your baby at all times, but keep powders and creams out of a toddler's reach.



Crib cautions as babies grow

For grabbers Once your baby starts to push up on all fours, about 5 months:

- Lower the mattress a notch. Lower the sides, but make sure they're at least 9 inches above the mattress. Be sure the side latch locks.
- Remove hanging mobiles and decorations.

For cruisers When your baby can stand, around 8 to 14 months:

- Lower the crib mattress as far as it goes.
- Remove the bumper so he can't climb onto it and boost himself out.
- When your child starts climbing out of his crib, it's time to move him to a toddler or big-kid bed (see page 42 for guidance).

Sleep tight—and secure

- Put your baby to sleep on his back to protect against SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).
- Keep pillows, quilts, padding, and stuffed toys outside the crib.
- Don't overbundle: Even in winter, a sheet or light blanket may be all that's needed. If the room is cold, try a sleeper rather than blankets.

Big-kid rooms

Beds

- Your child is ready for a bed when she's 35 inches tall or can climb out of her crib.
- Until you're sure she can sleep without falling out, use guardrails on both sides of the bed (unless one side is flush against a wall) installed according to manufacturer's directions. Or have her sleep on a mattress on the floor.
- Place bed away from windows and radiators. Install radiator covers to protect against burns without compromising heat; insulate pipes leading to radiators.



Windows

- Keep windows open no more than 4 inches. Cut drapery cords, or tie them up with safety devices from a hardware store. For free cord covers, call 800-506-4636 or go to www.windowcoverings.org.

Toy chests and storage

- Look for one with a completely removable lid.
- To make a wooden heirloom safe, install safety hinges (at hardware stores); otherwise, the lid could drop on your child's fingers or neck or trap her if she climbs inside. Just to be sure, drill several air holes in the back, front, or sides of the chest.
- If the room (or anywhere else in your home) has storage window seats, install safety hinges on these too—or latches you can lock until your child is older.

Bunk beds

- Until your child is at least 6, she shouldn't sleep on the top bunk.
- Whatever your child's age, install guardrails on the top bunk, on both sides, at least 5 inches above the mattress.
- If the upper mattress could get dislodged and fall (a child below might push it up with his hands or feet), install wooden slats in the bed's ledges to make sure this doesn't happen.
- Check to see that ladders are attached securely.

Safety net To learn more, try these websites:

- For the "Childproofing Checklist: Child's Bedroom" from the American Academy of Pediatrics: www.medem.com (enter "Childproofing" in the search box).
- Crib safety: www.aap.org/family/inffurn.htm.
- To check for recalls when buying furniture (especially secondhand): Go to www.cpsc.gov and click on "Recalls."

Sources: Robert Tanz, M.D., chairperson of the American Academy of Pediatrics's section on Injury and Poison Prevention; Kyran Quinlan, M.D., clinical associate at the University of Chicago Children's Hospital; U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission