

Safety Fact Sheet

Bassinettes and Cradles



What are bassinettes and cradles?

Bassinettes are nursery furniture designed to hold newborn babies while they sleep. They are usually made of willow, cane or plastic and consist of an oval shaped bed space attached to a high base on wheels. This allows the bassinette to be moved from room to room in the early weeks of a baby's life. Many bassinettes are also able to be dismantled, allowing the sleeping capsule to be carried by its handles and used as a portable bed.

Cradles are similar to bassinettes but are made of wood. They are usually rectangular in shape with four high sides and are often able to be rocked or swung from side to side.



How may children be injured when in bassinettes or cradles?

Falls

- Babies may fall out of the bassinette or cradle once they are able to roll over and pull themselves up.
- Babies may fall out of the bassinette if the sleeping capsule is not securely fastened to its base.

Strangulation

- Handles used to carry the bassinette may pose a strangulation hazard if they are able to be accessed by a baby from within the bassinette.

Suffocation

- Babies may become trapped between the mattress and bassinette or cradle frame if the mattress does not fit snugly inside the frame.
- Babies may suffocate if they roll face down or against items such as toys, head bumpers and pillows placed in the bassinette or cradle.
- Babies may suffocate under bed linen, if the bed is made up incorrectly. Loose bedclothes may be pulled up over a babies face.

How common are these injuries?

While it is known that babies have fallen from bassinettes and cradles, there are no recent published statistics available.

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Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for bassinettes and cradles?

There are no laws or Australian Standards relating to bassinettes and cradles. Please keep in mind the safety reminders below when choosing a bassinette or cradle.

Remember:

- Ensure that the bassinette or cradle is in good condition and has no sharp edges or gaps (see Cot Safety Fact Sheet for recommended gap widths).
- Choose a bassinette with a wide base to lessen its ability to tip over.
- When using a bassinette on its frame, ensure that the sleeping capsule is firmly attached to the base and that its handles are secured outside of the sleeping space.
- Ensure that the bassinette or cradle has no beads or decorative items that could be a choking hazard. If the bassinette is made of wicker, ensure that the material used is not splitting, as this could become a choking hazard.
- Do not use a bassinette or cradle once your baby is able to roll over or pull themselves up, as they may then be able to pull themselves up and fall over the side of the bassinette and cradle.
- When using a rocking cradle, ensure that it has a 'tilt limiter' to restrict the degree to which the cradle can be tilted. The angle should be no more than 10 degrees.
- Ensure that the rocking cradle has a locking device to use when your baby is asleep or unattended in his/her cradle.
- If you use a bassinette in a household with older siblings, ensure that the bassinette has locking wheels so that it cannot be moved by older siblings. Also make sure that older children use care when around the bassinette so as to not knock it over.
- Do not place your bassinette or cradle beneath a hanging picture or mirror that may fall on your child.
- Place the bassinette or cradle away from windows that have cord or blind strings close by. These strings may pose a strangulation hazard if your baby can access them from the sleeping capsule.
- Place the bassinette or cradle away from heaters, lights, power points and electrical appliances to ensure that your baby does not get burned.
- Ensure that the mattress used in the bassinette or cradle is one that fits snugly within the bed frame and that there are no gaps measuring more than 2.5cm between the mattress and the frame.
- Make sure that the sheets fit snugly around the mattress and are folded under the mattress so that they may not be dislodged when pulled on one side.
- Remove from the cot all pillows, bumpers, comforters and sheepskins before putting your baby to bed.
- Place your baby on his or her back to sleep (for more information on preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome please visit www.sidsandkids.org).
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends that you check for products that have been recalled (www.recalls.gov.au) prior to buying or borrowing an item for use with your child.