



SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES CHILD CARE

COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES LICENSING PROGRAM

Getting the appropriate amount of quality sleep plays a vital role in healthy child development. In order to facilitate quality restful sleep for children in care, care providers should set up a safe sleep environment. Requirements in the Child Care Licensing Regulation include:

- Ensuring a healthy and safe environment is provided at all times.
- Furniture, equipment and fixtures are clean and in good repair.
- That, while children are in care, no smoking occurs on the premises or in any vehicles used by employees to transport children.
- Equipment, furniture and supplies are of sturdy and safe construction, easy to clean and free from hazards.
- Furniture or equipment used for sleeping is used by only one child at a time, is clean and comfortable, and is developmentally appropriate for the child using it.
- Children do not have access to any object or substance that may be hazardous to their health and safety.
- For children under 36 months, a separate sleep area is required away from the main activity area.
- Children must be supervised at all times, including during rest periods.

General safe sleep practices for all children in care:

- Provide a tobacco-free environment at all times.
- Be mindful of bed/crib placement with regards to windows, blinds/curtains, cords, heaters, etc.
- Ensure the temperature in the room is comfortable.
- Children should not be put to sleep with any small items such as necklaces, hair barrettes and toys with buttons and/or batteries.
- Ensure children are put in a designated sleep area for rest periods. Strollers, car seats, couches and carriers are not intended as alternates to a safe crib or bed for rest periods. When sleeping in an upright position, a child's head can bend causing their oxygen supply to be compromised.
- Ensure that sleep equipment is age appropriate and that manufacturer's instructions confirm sleeping is its intended use.
- Children should not be put to bed with a bottle or sippy cup.

Important facts regarding safe sleep specifically for infants:

- Always put infants on their back to sleep.
- Infants should always be put to sleep on a firm and flat surface designed for specifically for sleeping – manufacturer's instructions should confirm sleeping is its intended use [an approved crib or playpen for example]. There is no alternative.
- Infants should not be placed on a child or adult bed for sleeping. These beds were not designed for infants. Once again, strollers, car seats, swings, couches or carries are not safe or acceptable alternatives to a crib or age appropriate bed.
- Cribs over 10 years in age should not be used. Do not modify a crib in any way. If cribs are used, they should meet the Canadian Cribs, Cradles and Bassinets Regulations, which can be found at: <https://lois-laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2010-261.pdf>.
- Ensure the sleep area/cribs are clear of clutter. Nothing should be added to the sleep area of young children [pillows, bumper pads, quilts, soft toys, etc.].
- Ensure sleep surfaces include a firm, tight fitting mattress and a tight fitting bottom sheet.

How care providers can provide quality safe sleep for the children in their care:

- It is important to discuss safe sleep practices with your families. Set boundaries around your sleep routines and do not accommodate requests that may create unsafe sleep practices.
- Have consistent sleep routines; it will be a benefit to both children and child care providers. Plan activities around rest time to ensure children are given adequate opportunity to sleep. Keep in mind that infants may require multiple rest periods per day and these should be provided in the designated sleep area.
- Ensure children are checked for items that may pose a risk to their safety while sleeping, such as drawstrings on clothing, jewelry or hair accessories.

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- Check equipment to ensure there are no recalls or safety concerns regarding the equipment.
- Provide a clutter free sleep environment with good air quality and circulation.
- Provide direct supervision for young children in care while sleeping.
- Keep exits clean and establish emergency protocols should an incident occur during sleep time.

When establishing a safe sleep environment for children in your care, it is important to consider both the environment and the equipment that you are using. Also, ongoing supervision is a key means to ensuring all children in your care are safe, particularly in their sleep and is a requirement under the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Child care providers are encouraged to check equipment regularly to ensure that it is in good condition and to constantly evaluate their napping practices to ensure that each individual child's needs are met safely and their need to sleep is accommodated.

Adequate and safe sleep is important to healthy development. The following websites may also be useful:

- http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php?utm_source=rsa-220-150&utm_medium=download-buttons&utm_campaign=CHS1213.
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/safe-sleep.html>.
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/reports-publications/consumer-education/your-child-safe/sleep-time.html>.
- http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2011/Every_sleep_counts_resource_web.pdf.