



**Department of
Early Education and Care**
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Large Group and School Age Child Care Licensing

POLICY STATEMENT: Alternative Napping for Infants 12 to 15 months

Child Care Licensing Standards 606 CMR 7.11(13)(e)(2) Sleep Rest and Quiet Activities requires that “*Programs serving infants must nap infants in an individual crib, portacrib, playpen or bassinet.*” Child Care Licensing Standards 606 CMR 7.02 Definitions defines an infant as “*a child who is under 15 months of age*”. Although this regulation requires that infants need to nap in a crib, portacrib playpen or bassinet, the following criteria will be accepted for older infants (from 12 to 15 months) to rest on a cot or a mat.

Background

- Large Group and School Age Programs licensed to serve infants and toddlers have, in practice, used the period from 12 months to 15 months as a transition time. During this time, staff focus on helping older infants develop and practice skills needed for the infant’s transition into a toddler classroom. Infants who may have used a high chair now have the physical development to sit on a small chair at a table when having snacks and other meals. Infants who were placed in a crib, portacrib, playpen or bassinet for naps begin to make the transition to using a mat or cot for rest time.
- Infants who are enrolled in a mixed infant/toddler room may feel that they are not participating in normal classroom activities if they are prevented from moving to a mat or cot once they have reached the age of 12 months. For example, an older infant may feel isolated sleeping in a crib away from the other children in the room. In this case, staff as well as the parents may deem it developmentally appropriate for this child to sleep on a mat with his/her friends.
- A child’s size and developmental level may lead to a situation where it is more dangerous to have a child sleep in a crib rather than on the floor on a mat or on a cot. It is not unusual for an older infant to attempt to climb out of a crib especially if all of the other children are on a mat or cot.

- Many of the institutional sized cribs are not designed for older infants as these cribs tend to be smaller. An older infant may feel cramped and uncomfortable in one of these cribs.
- Cribs in classrooms take up program space which is an important consideration. This is especially significant in a mixed infant/toddler classroom where the added space taken up by the cribs can be an important addition to classroom activities.

The following criteria should be used by programs:

- The individual needs of the child have been considered in making the decision and it has been determined that the infant is developmentally ready to make the move to a cot or mat.
- There are no medical reasons that would conflict with moving the infant to a mat or cot.
- Parents have been included in the decision to change the child's sleeping environment and have shared in the discussion about whether or not to move the infant to a mat or cot.
- Evacuation procedures have been reviewed and updated if necessary to ensure that all infants napping on cots or mats can be safely evacuated without delay.
- Evacuation drills have been practiced without the cribs so that staff and children are familiar with the new routine to be followed in the case of an emergency.

This procedure of moving older infants to a mat or cot will not be allowed in multi-age classrooms since the safety of the napping infant may be jeopardized by the older children in the classroom. Also, this procedure will not be allowed to continue if a review of the injury report forms shows an increase in the number of injuries involving older infants who have been placed on a mat or cot for rest time.