



Safe Sleep for Infants FAQ

Policy Title: Safe Sleep for Infants

Policy Number: FO-26-05

Release Date: September 9, 2026

Effective Date: November 1, 2026

Policy Link: [Safe Sleep for Infants Policy](#)

FAQ

Q. What type of blanket may be used for infants?

A. No blankets of any type may be used for the napping of children under 12 months of age. This policy aligns with the latest research and recommendations of the National Institute of Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics that recommend children be slept in a bare crib with no blankets. Blanket-sleeper type pajamas or sleep sacks are a good alternative to a blanket, as long as they are not weighted and do not restrict movement.

Q. What is an “approved” crib, bassinet, portacrib, etc.?

A. Any piece of sleep equipment used must be approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. All programs must be prepared to show documentation that their cribs meet the standards (16 CFR 1219 for full size cribs or 16 CFR 1220 for non-full-size cribs). Note: beginning June 28, 2011, all cribs manufactured or offered for sale, lease, or resale were required to meet the new crib standards. Cribs should have slats that are spaced no more than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches apart. A firm mattress must be snug to the crib, portacrib, etc. The space between the mattress edge and crib should not be more than the width of two adult-sized fingers. The mattress must have a tight-fitting sheet. Bumper pads may not be used.

Q. How long can I use a bassinet for sleep?

- A. Bassinet use should be discontinued once the infant reaches 5 months old, exceeds the weight limit set by the manufacturer, or once an infant begins moving and turning around unassisted (whichever comes first).

Q. Can I use a bassinet swing for sleep?

- A. A bassinet swing (an infant swing which is intended for use by a child lying completely flat), may be used for sleep provided that the surface remains completely flat both while in motion and while at rest. The infant using the bassinet must not exceed the length or weight limits recommended by the manufacturer. Use of all other infant swings for sleep is prohibited.

Q. How long can I use a crib to nap a toddler?

- A. Toddlers should not be placed in a crib to sleep once they are able to climb out independently. Usually, children who are 35" tall and/or are between 18 and 30 months old can climb over the side railings of a crib and should be moved to another sleep surface. Before children reach that age, the crib mattress should be moved to a lower level to protect a baby who can push up on their hands and knees, sit or stand. Further, cribs should only be used for napping purposes and may not be used to "restrain" or "contain" a toddler for the convenience of staff.

Q. When can I transition a child to a mat for napping?

- A. EEC regulations require that children from birth to 15 months old be placed in individual cribs, portable cribs, playpens, or bassinets for napping. As a general rule, children may be transitioned to a mat or other approved sleep surface for napping at 15 months old.

Q. What should educators do when an infant falls asleep while they are outside?

- A. Educators should not disrupt their program activities if an infant falls asleep while outside if they are safely in a stroller that is able to recline, creating a flat, firm sleep surface. They should still follow all procedures, including not over-bundling infants in strollers in the winter, making sure they are not overheated in the summer, making sure they are supervised, and making sure nothing interferes with breathing (stroller straps secure but not too tight, no blankets or soft objects in strollers with infants; baby is positioned so that they can breathe freely). The infant must be moved to a safe sleep environment immediately after returning to the licensed program space.

Q. What should an educator do if a parent drops off an infant in a car seat and says that the infant just fell asleep? Does the educator have to remove the infant's outerwear and move the infant to a crib?

A. If a parent drops off an infant in a car seat, the educator must move the infant to a crib, bassinet, or portacrib. The educator must ensure that the infant is not dressed too warmly for the indoor environment and that any item of clothing that creates a risk of entanglement or strangulation is removed.

Q. If the infant falls asleep in a swing, is it okay to leave them in the swing?

A. No. If an infant falls asleep in a swing, the infant must be moved immediately to a crib, bassinet, or portacrib.

Q. If an infant rolls over on their own, should the educator re-position the infant on their back?

A. Once an infant can roll over on their own, the infant should not be rolled back over during nap. The educator should document when the child is first able to roll over on their own. The educator must always place the infant to sleep on their back initially and must follow all other safe sleep regulations.

The educator must be sure that the infant has enough supervised tummy time while awake and alert so that the infant can develop proper head and neck control and become comfortable with this position.

Q. What should an educator do if a parent brings in a special sleep toy?

A. The educator must share the program's SIDS reduction practices which prohibit toys, stuffed animals, soft bedding or other soft padded material in cribs, bassinets, portacribs, etc. An educator may use the special sleep toy to comfort the infant before they go to sleep.

Q. If the infant spits out the pacifier while sleeping, do I need to remove it?

A. A pacifier that is free of extra components does not need to be removed from the infant's sleep space if they spit it out. Pacifiers with extra components, including but not limited to attachments such as clips to the infant's clothing, beads, small blankets, or plush/stuffed toys, and built-in components such as straps, cords, or tethers, are not permitted in the infant's sleep space.

Q. How close can the cribs, bassinets, portacribs be to each other?

- A. They must be at least 2 feet apart, or there must be a distance of at least 3 feet between children's faces while resting or napping [See 606 CMR 7.11(13)(d)(4)(a)].

Q. Can twins share a crib?

- A. No, each infant must sleep in their own crib, portacrib, playpen, or bassinet, regardless of how the family sleeps them at home.

Q. Can I swaddle the infants in my program?

- A. No, infants may not be swaddled while in care. [Evidence shows](#) that swaddling an infant who is not used to being swaddled can lower their arousal response, therefore increasing their risk of SIDS. If a swaddled baby rolls over, the risk of suffocation or SIDS increases. Swaddling may also lead to overheating and can interfere with proper hip development.

Q. Can an infant wear hair accessories while sleeping? (e.g.: headbands, bows, clips)

- A. No. Educators must remove hair accessories before placing an infant in the safe sleep environment. Hair accessories, such as headbands, hair ribbons, or clips, present a risk of entanglement or strangulation.