Nursery Safety Checklist

Ensure that staff and volunteers are regularly inspecting the nursery to make sure it remains a safe place for the children.

The following list of items should assist with that inspection.

# Staffing

**Children Ages Staff to Child Ratio Requirement**Infants 1 Staff Member for Every 3 Children  
Toddlers 1 Staff Member for Every 3 Children  
2 Years Old 1 Staff Member for Every 6 Children  
3 or 4 Years Old 1 Staff Member for Every 10 Children  
5 Years Old and Older 1 Staff Member for Every 15 Children

*There must be at least one adult, 18 years of age or older, present at all times.*

# Emergency Safety

■ Make sure the room contains a stocked first aid kit.

■ Post important phone numbers, such as those for the local poison control center and nearest hospital emergency room, near the phone.

■ If there is no phone in the room, provide the location of the nearest telephone.

■ Install a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector.

■ Hang a fire extinguisher out of children’s reach.

■ Post disaster response instructions and a map to the nearest exit.

# Furnishings

■ Do not stack furniture or toys so that a child would find them inviting to climb.

■ Install gates on stairwells accessible to children.

■ Make sure all electrical cords are out of reach, especially those attached to hot objects.

■ Do not use hot appliances, such as space heaters or coffee makers.

■ Secure shelves and furniture, so kids cannot pull them over.

■ Pad any sharp corners or edges.

■ Remove any poisonous plants.

■ Place non-toxic plants out of arm’s reach.

# Cribs

■ Look for loose or missing slats.

■ Make sure slats are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart to prevent head entrapment.

■ Remove decorative knobs on corner posts that could entangle clothing.

■ Use a tight-fitting mattress.

■ You should be able to fit only two fingers between the mattress and the crib side.

■ Tighten loose nuts, screws, and bolts. Make sure mattress supports are secure.

# Playpens

■ Make sure the mesh netting has a fine weave, so it will not catch the buttons on children’s

clothing.

■ Inspect the mesh to make sure there are no tears, holes, or loose threads.

■ Place a warning label on drop-side mesh playpens reminding workers never to leave children in the pen with the side down.

■ Make sure slat spaces on a wooden playpen are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.

# High chairs

■ Check to see that the high chair has a wide, stable base that will not collapse easily.

■ Make sure it has functional waist and crotch restraining straps.

■ Ensure that the high chair tray locks securely.

■ Firmly attach tubing caps or plugs that a child could pull off and swallow.

# Toys

■ Make sure none of the toys in the room can cause children under age three to choke or suffocate.

These include:

* Toys with small parts
* Fuzzy stuffed animals or dolls
* Balloons (Uninflated, they pose a choking hazard)
* Foam toys

# Floors

■ Get on your hands and knees to survey the nursery areas from a child’s perspective.

■ Make sure the floor stays free of small objects a child could swallow, such as coins, paper clips, or buttons.

■ Eliminate any falling or tripping hazards.

# Doors

■ Place locks or latches on doors that children could open.

■ Consider using half doors to prevent children from wandering off while providing visibility.

# Walls

■ Remove tacks and pins from areas of bulletin boards children can reach.

■ Cover electrical outlets.

■ Repair peeling wallpaper or chipped paint.

■ Secure drapery or window-treatment cords.

# Ceiling

■ Make sure ceiling tiles are firmly in place.

■ Remove any loose plaster from textured ceilings.

# Supplies

■ Store cleaning and diaper-changing supplies out of children’s reach or in latched cabinets.

■ Use only non-toxic paint, crayons, and other art supplies.

■ Do not allow children to play on or around carts holding TVs or audiovisual equipment.