

Crib and Baby Product Defects

A parent or other provider of care to infants and children can never be too careful when it comes to preventing accidents and injuries involving the children in their charge. The following checklist can help prevent accidents. Sometimes, however, even the best of efforts cannot ward off unfortunate events, in which case an experienced products liability or personal injury attorney can help a family recover its losses.

Cribs

- ___ Verify that the crib has not been recalled.
- ___ Look for the safety certification seal on new cribs.
- ___ Slats must be spaced no more than 2-3/8 inches apart.
- ___ Make sure that no slats are missing, loose, or cracked.
- ___ The crib mattress must fit snugly, with no more than two-fingers width between the edge of the mattress and the side of the crib.
- ___ The mattress support must be securely attached to the headboard and footboard.
- ___ Corner posts must be no higher than 1/16 of an inch.
- ___ There should be no cutouts in the top edge of the headboard and footboard.
- ___ Make sure that drop-side latches are not easily released by a baby and that they securely hold the side in the raised position.
- ___ All screws, bolts and other hardware must be present and tight.
- ___ Use a sheet designed specifically to fit a crib, and make sure that it fits tightly and cannot be easily dislodged by pulling on the corners.

Crib Toys

- ___ Verify that the toy has not been recalled.
- ___ Make sure that no strings or cords dangle into the crib.
- ___ Crib gyms and mobiles should have a label advising their removal from the crib when the child can push up on his or her hands and knees or reaches five months of age, whichever occurs first.

- ___ Make sure that all toy parts are too big to be a choking hazard.

Gates and Enclosures

- ___ Verify that the gate or circular play enclosure has not been recalled.
- ___ Verify that openings in the gate are too small to entrap a child's head or neck.
- ___ Gates should have a pressure bar or other fastener that resists force from a child.

High Chairs

- ___ Verify that the high chair has not been recalled.
- ___ Make sure there is a "crotch" strap that must be used when restraining a child in the high chair.
- ___ The high chair should have restraining straps that are independent of the tray.
- ___ Make sure the tray locks securely.
- ___ Verify that the buckles on the straps are easy to fasten and unfasten.
- ___ High chairs should have a wide base for stability.
- ___ Caps or plugs on tubing must be firmly attached and not capable of being pulled off and choked on by a child.
- ___ Make sure a folding high chair has an effective locking device.

Playpens

- ___ Verify that the playpen has not been recalled.
- ___ Playpens and travel cribs must have top rails that automatically lock when lifted into the normal use position.
- ___ Make sure that the playpen does **not** have a rotating hinge in the center of the top rails.
- ___ Drop-side mesh playpens and mesh cribs should have a label warning users to never leave the side in the down position.

- Verify that the playpen mesh has a tight weave, consisting of less than ¼-inch openings.
- Make sure the mesh has no tears or loose threads and that it is securely attached to the top rail and floorplate.
- Verify that the slats of a wooden playpen are spaced no more than 2-3/8 inches apart.

For more information on these and other potentially hazardous infants' and children's products, and for up-to-date information on product recalls, visit the CPSC's website at www.cpsc.gov.