

Purchasing Cots

What is the problem?

The problems and hazards that can arise from the use of cots in early childhood services involve workers:

- bending and reaching down and/or forwards to place a baby in the cot or remove them from the cot
- adopting an awkward and sustained bending or reaching posture when comforting a child to help them sleep
- sides do not drop down and the worker has to lean over the top rail to access the baby to place or remove them
- poor fitting mattress where a gap between the mattress and base may be a choking hazard for babies.



What are the solutions to this problem?

Purchasing a cot with the following design features may enable your organization to eliminate or minimise these problems and hazards and reduce injury risks for Children's Services workers

Higher cot base and mattress

Cots with a higher base and mattress will not require Children's Services workers to bend and/or reach down too far or too far forward to place or remove a baby.

The high base and mattress should minimise bending and reaching down when the baby is being comforted. The worker sitting next to the cot on an adult height chair and placing their hand through the side of the cot can also help to improve worker posture for this task.



Provide an adjustable side rail that is easily lowered and raised

The rails on one side should be height adjustable and not fixed so it can be lowered to provide clearance to place and remove the baby.

This side rail should be easy to latch to lower it and secure it once raised.



(continued over)

PURCHASING COTS *continued*

Avoid trapping or choking hazards

The rails, base and mattress should all be designed to prevent a baby from getting their head trapped and possibly choking.

Maintaining and cleaning

Cots and their components should be easy to clean and require minimal or no maintenance or present any hazards to workers during cleaning or maintenance.

Consulting with employees when purchasing new equipment

The design and use of new cots can result in risks to employees who will work to place, remove and comfort babies. To ensure that new cots you choose prevent or minimise these risks you must consult with the employees who will be using it. They will be able to give you feedback on any similar items that they have previously used or are still using so you can understand the better design features and those features that are best avoided. They should also be able to help review and provide feedback on new items being considered.

Where employees are represented by Health and Safety Representatives, they must be involved in this consultation, with or without the involvement of the employees.



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

Level 3, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy 3065 (PO Box 1246, Collingwood 3066)
Phone 03 9489 3500 **Fax** 03 9486 4226 **Rural** 1300 730 119
Email elaa@elaa.org.au **Web** www.elaa.org.au