



PARENT PLUS

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Safe and sound: Help young children get a good night's rest

When your child was an infant, you took every precaution to make sure he/she was safe in the crib. You placed the baby on its back to sleep, avoided overbundling and tucked the blanket below the chest and under the arms to keep it away from his/her face.

Parents should continue to take precautions to ensure that toddlers and young children remain safe during nighttime hours.

Children may be ready to graduate from a crib to a toddler bed or bed by age 2, according to George J. Cohen, M.D., FAAP, editor-in-chief of *Guide to Your Child's Sleep*. "When the child gets tall enough to get a leg up to the top of the crib rail, it is best to switch to a bed to avoid a tumble."

Children who can climb out of their cribs and leave their bedrooms at night also risk injury when they wander the house unsupervised. Dr. Cohen recommends putting a bell on the child's door to awaken parents if the child tries to leave the room. "The child needs to learn to stay there until the parent comes to get him."

Making sure that dangerous household items are unreachable both in daytime and nighttime hours is essential, he added.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Dr. Cohen also offer these tips to help ensure your child

is safe when sleeping.

- Do not give your child a pillow until age 2. Make sure the pillow is relatively small and firm.
- Use guardrails only to keep a child from falling out of bed, not to restrain the child in the bed.
- Check labels of sleepwear before buying to determine the proper size and fit for the child. Sleepwear size 9 months to size 14 is sold as either flame-resistant or snug fitting (non-flame-resistant). Nonflame-resistant sleepwear should be snug fitting, because loose-fitting sleepwear is more likely to catch fire.
- Check sleepwear labels and fabric softener package labels before washing flame-resistant sleepwear to make sure fabric softener will not reduce flame retardancy.
- Keep cribs/beds away from windows to avoid falls.



- Keep drapery cords and electrical cords out of reach to avoid strangulation and falls.
- Place bunk beds in a corner with walls on two sides. Never let a child under age 6 years sleep in the top bunk.

— Trisha Koriath