

Updated : 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## **Safety Alert- Cots**

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate wish to advise all service providers to be vigilant at all times in the use of cots and ensure they are inspected regularly and maintained to a high standard. We are advising each service that the maintenance of cots and all equipment in the service is the responsibility of the service provider.

The Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 require as follows in accordance with:

### **Regulation 23: Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.**

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of a preschool child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

### **Regulation 20: Facilities for rest and play.**

A registered provider shall ensure that... there are adequate and suitable facilities for a preschool child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

### **Regulation 21: Equipment and materials**

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service..*

Areas to be considered when examining cots include the following:

- that standard cots are in use- children less than 2 years of age attending a childcare facility should sleep in a standard cot.
- cots must be maintained in a proper state of repair:
  - in good condition
  - of good design
  - solid and stable
  - have a recognised safety standard.
  - the bars should be no more than 6cm apart (round) or no more than 7.5cm apart (flat)
- cots and beds are to be kept away from blinds, radiators and windows
- there is adequate space between each cot
- the cot barrier height is sufficient to prevent a child falling out

In addition the cot mattress must be:

- Have a well fitting safety mattress.
- clean firm and correct size for cot
- Covered with waterproof material.
- Easy to clean and disinfect.
- Well aired and dry.
- Gap between the mattress and the sides of the cot should be less than 2.5cm.

Additional information on safe sleep available as follows:

1. **Safe Sleep for your Baby – Reduce the Risk of Cot Death:**  
[https://www.healthpromotion.ie/publication/fullListing?category=Safety and accident prevention](https://www.healthpromotion.ie/publication/fullListing?category=Safety%20and%20accident%20prevention)
2. **Safe Sleep for under 2's :** [http://firstlight.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Safe\\_Sleep.pdf](http://firstlight.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Safe_Sleep.pdf)
3. **Tusla Early Years Inspectorate :** Questions and Answers document for Early Years Services  
<http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-pre-school-inspection-services/questions-asked-to-tusla-from-the-early-years-sector>

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