

**31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

## **Safety Alert- Cots**

Tusla - Child and Family Agency and The 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 (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 require as follows in accordance with:

### **Regulation 27 Safety**

*A person carrying on a preschool service shall take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of a preschool child attending the service*

and

### **Regulation 25 Equipment and Materials**

*There is sufficient furniture, play and work equipment and materials, and that such furniture, equipment and materials are suitable, non toxic, in a proper state of repair and maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.*

Areas to be considered when examining cots include the following:

- 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 should 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:

- have a well fitting safety mattress
- be 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-the-hse-from-the-early-years-sector>

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