

7

FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND BEDDING

standard 7 Furniture, equipment and bedding

7.1

STANDARD

Age-appropriate furniture, equipment and bedding are to be provided and maintained in good order.

Rationale

Age-appropriate furniture and equipment, in sound repair, assists in maintaining children's safety and wellbeing, and supports their development.

Each child should have individual access to a bed/culturally appropriate bedding to promote their undisturbed sleep. The provision of bed linen and implementation of adequate hygiene measures are necessary to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

(For overnight care requirements, refer to Standard 18: Overnight Care.)

7.1.1

Furniture and equipment

Where applicable, furniture and other equipment must comply with and be maintained so that it continues to meet relevant Australian Standards.

7.1.2

Equipment to support the program

- a) There must be adequate, appropriate equipment available to meet the age/developmental stages of the children in care.
- b) Equipment is to be maintained in a good state of repair, and, if damaged or unsafe, it must be inaccessible to children.
- c) Equipment must not pose a hazard to children.

7.1.3

Nursery equipment

- a) **Cots**
 - i) The carer must use or provide for use cots which meet the Australian Standard 2172:1995 (Household Cots) or Australian Standard 2195:1999 (Folding Cots).
 - ii) Cots must be:
 - a. safely positioned;
 - b. free of transfers, and any string, ribbon, ties or beading; and
 - c. free of all types of cot bumpers (padding tied to the cot).
- b) **Bunks**
 - i) Top bunks must not be used by children in care.
 - ii) Bunk ladders must be inaccessible to children in care.
- c) **High/low chairs (chairs with a tray)**
 - i) Children must be supervised when in a high or low chair.
 - ii) An age-appropriate five-point safety harness is to be used to protect a child sitting in a high or low chair.
- d) **Prams and strollers**
 - i) Children must be supervised at all times when in a pram or stroller.
 - ii) The carriage must not be overloaded.
 - iii) An age-appropriate safety harness is to be fitted and adjusted to each child.
 - iv) As a general rule, prams and strollers are not to be used for children to sleep in. However, if a child does fall asleep in a pram or stroller, the carer must continue to supervise the child.
- e) **Walkers and jolly jumpers**

Walkers and jolly jumpers must not be used.

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7.1.4

Cots/beds

Each child in care is to have access to an age-appropriate bed or cot.

7.1.5

Storage of beds/mattresses

When not in use, beds/mattresses must be:

- a) cleaned;
- b) aired; and
- c) stored appropriately.

7.1.6

Bed linen

- a) There must be sufficient bed linen (eg sheets/duonas/blankets; and impervious mattress covers, where required) to ensure that children do not share the bed linen prior to laundering the bed linen.
- b) After each use, the bed linen must be:
 - i) laundered; or
 - ii) each child's linen stored separately.

Nursery furniture is a significant factor in almost 20% of the injuries to children in their first year. It is important that carers choose equipment and furniture which incorporate recommended safety standards, and/or which comply with applicable Australian Standards. It is the carer's responsibility to:

- follow manufacturer's instructions with regard to care and safe maintenance of nursery furniture and equipment;
- have a management plan in place for the replacement of items which no longer meet the relevant Australian standard; and
- access up-to-date information about safety standards.

What are relevant Australian Standards?

Current, relevant Australian Standards include:

Household Cots: Australian Standard 2172:1995

Folding Cots: Australian Standard 2195:1999

Prams and Strollers: Australian Standard 2088

Bunks: Australian Standard 4220: 1994 is mandated under both Australian Government (Trade Practices) and Tasmanian (Sale of Hazardous Goods Act 1977) legislation. This concerns guardrails, ladder, mattresses, etc. For information, go to the website of the Tasmanian Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading at http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/ca/product-safety/fi_Sheet_bunk.

How can I find out about standards for nursery furniture?

Information can be obtained from:

- Standards Australia (<http://www.standards.com.au>)
- The Australian Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs (<http://www.consumer.gov.au>)
- The Tasmanian Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (<http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/ca>)
- Kidsafe (Child Accident Prevention Council) (<http://www.greenweb.com.au/kidsafe>)
- Infant Nursery Products Association of Australia (<http://www.inpaa.asn.au>)
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (<http://www.accc.gov.au/>) - go to 'Product Safety'.

Is there any further information available about products (such as nursery furniture) which are safe?

Yes. An example is a *Safebaby Code* booklet. The Code is based on research into children's injuries and nursery products, undertaken by groups including the Monash University Accident Research Centre. The Code outlines when Australian Standards or voluntary standards apply. For products where there is no standard the Code outlines where research has been used in the design of safety features, for example high chairs, change tables and playpens.

(This booklet is available through Kidsafe and Infant Nursery Products Association of Australia.)

What do I need to look for in children's furniture?

Where there is an Australian Standard, it is the carer's responsibility to check a product against that standard.

If a product meets an Australian Standard, this will usually be included on the product label. Generally, children's furniture should:

- be of appropriate height, size and construction for children;
- have smooth surfaces, rounded corners, no sharp edges or points;
- appropriately use non-toxic materials;
- be of appropriate weight, stability and sturdiness; and
- have no entrapment hazards.

(Note: This is not a definitive list.)

Use of appropriate furniture will assist to minimise accidents, and enhance the development of children's confidence and self-esteem.

Consideration of the carer's own health and safety, eg appropriate techniques to lift children into chairs/cots, etc, is also important.

What do I need to look for in cots/beds?

Until children are approximately 18 months of age, cots are recommended as the most appropriate 'bedding'.

It is compulsory that all cots sold, whether new or secondhand, comply with the relevant Australian Standard. It is recommended that the carer use the Australian Standard 2172:1995 (Household Cots) as a guide.

Porta-cots: Porta-cots are recommended ONLY where they meet Australian Standard 2195:1999, and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, such as the assembly of the porta-cot, the weight and height of a child who can use a porta-cot, etc.

My cot does not meet the Australian Standard - what do I do?

It is recognised that the carer may need to plan financially for the replacement of a cot that does not meet the Australian Standard.

In that case, the carer must develop a realistic management plan, and discuss this with the approved registration body/Child Care Unit.

What other factors should I consider?

Research indicates that important factors include:

- the manner in which the cot is decorated (eg ribbon, ties, beading, etc) could cause dangers to children;
- location of the cot, ie keep cot away from cords, power points, etc;
- maintenance (eg metal parts to be corrosion free; no flaking paint or transfers; wooden components not splintered or damaged, etc);
- the mattress, ie when the mattress is pushed firmly to one side of the cot, the gap between the other side and the cot should be no greater than 2.5 cm.

Ongoing maintenance of nursery equipment?

Regular checks are essential for the safety of children and the carer, and to satisfy the carer's duty of care requirements.

Where a cot/piece of nursery equipment is damaged or unsafe, it must be inaccessible to child.

For registration/ licensing, the applicant will need to provide the following:

- Where the cot meets Australian Standards, documentation, eg labels, which demonstrates compliance.
- Where existing cot/s and nursery equipment do not meet Australian Standards, a reasonable management plan outlining replacement of the cot/s and equipment.
- Details of replaced equipment.

self-assessment guide furniture, equipment and bedding

7.1.4	<p>Cots/beds Each child in care is to have access to an age-appropriate bed or cot.</p>	<p>For initial registration/licensing You must have a sufficient number of cots/age-appropriate beds for the number of children you will care for</p> <p>For re-registration/re-licensing Details re cots/beds on record; you will be asked if there have been any changes</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1.5	<p>Storage of beds/mattresses After use, beds/mattresses must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) cleaned; b) aired; and c) stored appropriately. 	<p>For initial registration/licensing You must have appropriate procedures in place to clean/air/store beds and mattresses</p> <p>For re-registration/re-licensing Your procedures will be reviewed</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1.6	<p>Bed linen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There must be sufficient bed linen (eg sheets/doonas/blankets; and impervious mattress covers, where required) to ensure that children do not share the bed linen prior to laundering the bed linen. b) After each use, the linen must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) laundered; or ii) each child's linen stored separately. 	<p>For initial registration/licensing You must have a sufficient supply of bed linen; and appropriate laundering procedures in place</p> <p>For re-registration/re-licensing Your procedures, etc will be reviewed</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXPLANATION

1. Documentation Column: Carer may complete prior to registration/licensing visit/s.
2. Comments/Queries Column: Carer may complete prior to registration/licensing visit/s.