

# Safer sleep guidance

## Introduction

The announcement to revise the early years foundation stage (EYFS) regarding Safe sleep measures and requirements come after the government's review of proposals raised through the Campaign for Gigi, a safety advocacy initiative launched by Katie Wheeler and John Meehan following the death of their nine-month-old daughter, Genevieve ('Gigi') at a nursery in 2022.

It is also important to understand and reduce the risks of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in babies up to 12 months of age, and sudden unexpected death in childhood (SUDC) in children aged over 12 months. A safer sleep environment can help to reduce that risk.

## EYFS 2025

The current EYFS, 3.84 (settings), and 3.85 (childminders) states:

Sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that babies are placed down to sleep safely in line with the latest government safety guidance: [Sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\) - NHS](#). Practitioners should read NHS advice on safety of sleeping babies: [NHS Reduce the risk of SIDS](#). Size: 189KB File format: pdf

## Time scale

The EYFS is expected to be updated from September 2026.

The March 2026 letter from the minister for Early Education states whilst these requirements will be in effect from September 2026, providers must be compliant now.

## Safer sleep requirements

**Requirements** for children under one (specifically):

- Babies aged one year and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot. This includes carrycots, moses baskets and travel cots.

**Requirements** for all children under two:

- Children are placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor.
- Sleep spaces should only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well-fitted baby sleep bag may be used. Check the manufacturer's recommendations before using a baby sleep bag.
- Where blankets are used, the child is placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
- Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges or straps.
- Children should not get too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 - 20°C. To check if a baby or child is too hot or cold, feel their chest or the back of their neck (hands and feet will usually be cooler, which is normal).
- Children's heads are not covered.
- Children under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping. A baby monitor can be used for children over six months of age, and you must ensure it allows children to be seen and heard at all times.

## Sleeping positions

As with all other sleep places it is important to make sure that the pram mattress is firm, flat and waterproof.

The Lullaby Trust advise against allowing babies to sleep in a seated or inclined position, such as in pushchairs or buggies: [Sleeping position | The Lullaby Trust](#).

## Equipment

It is key to consider that the item complies with British Safety Standards. It should have a BSI mark if it does comply. This list is provided for reference, you must ensure you are satisfied that your setting's sleeping arrangements meet the EYFS requirements.

The safety standards for baby sleep products are:

- Cots and travel cots – BE EN 716-1:2017.
- Moses baskets and carry cots – BS EN 1466:2014.
- Bedside cribs – BS-EN 1130:2019.
- Mattresses – BS 7177:2008 + A1:2011.
- Mattresses for cots, travel cots and cribs: BS EN 16890:2017+A1:2021.
- Sleep bags – BS EN 16781:2018.

When considering items that a baby will sleep on, such as a mattress, it needs to be firm, so that the baby's head does not sink more than a few millimetres, should be entirely flat with no raised or cushioned areas and be fitted with a waterproof cover.

If using Coracles, check to ensure they meet the BSI mark for safety standards.

Both the NHS and The Lullaby Trusts do not recommend the use of soft-sided pods or nests, pillows, duvets or thick heaving bedding, cot bumpers, hammocks or sleep positioners.

The Lullaby Trust and the NHS are both clear that a clear cot is a safer cot: [Keeping a clear cot | The Lullaby Trust](#).

The new guidance will incorporate unnecessary items such as toys that can cover babies faces and obstruct their breathing.

Should the child like to sleep with an item such as a cuddly toy, muslin blanket or such like, one suggestion is that the adult who stays present with the child removes the items from the cot once the child is sleeping.

It is advisable that childminders work with parents to support them to understand safer sleeping guidelines.

## Recommended guidance

- [MD Letter](#). Size: 156KB File format: pdf
- [Help for early years providers : Safer sleep](#).
- [Baby safer sleep advice - Best Start in Life - NHS](#).
- [Promoting safer baby care | The Lullaby Trust](#).
- [Baby Check app | The Lullaby Trust](#).
- [Sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\) - NHS](#).
- [Office for Product Safety and Standards](#).

# Advice for Early Years settings – sleeping space for babies

the  
lullaby  
trust

The safest place for babies to sleep is on a **clear, flat and separate sleep space** such as a:



Moses  
Basket



Cot



Crib



Travel  
cot



Carrycot

We advise against sleeping babies in a seated or inclined position such as in

- ✗ **pushchairs /buggies**
- ✗ **car seats**
- ✗ **bouncy chairs**
- ✗ **swings**
- ✗ **hammocks**

These are not suitable sleep surfaces for babies as they are not firm and flat, therefore can be associated with an increased risk of SIDS. This is because if a baby's chin is close to, or on their chest, this position can restrict their airways and become a possible contributing factor to SIDS so should be avoided.

All of our safer sleep advice is for every sleep and nap.

If a baby falls asleep in a sitting device they should be moved to a flat surface. Don't place sitting devices on a high or soft surface.

**This advice should be the setting's policy to ensure safer sleep is always followed.**

## SLEEP SUPERVISION

In a nursery /childcare environment, sleeping babies should be closely supervised. This can be a member of staff being present in a dedicated sleep room whilst the babies sleep or frequent monitoring by members of staff in an open plan room.

- ✔ **Inspect cots, bedding and mattresses and ensure all are in good condition before each sleep session**
- ✔ **To avoid overheating, babies should be dressed appropriately for the room temperature (the ideal temperature is 16-20 degrees)**