



**UNSAFE CRIBS CAN INJURE OR KILL
KEEPING BABIES SAFE OFFERS GUIDELINES,
ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION**

(NEW YORK, Dec 08, 2008) Joyce Davis thought her son Garret was safe when she left him in a popular brand of portable crib. Thinking the hard cardboard flooring was uncomfortable for the child, the family had purchased a supplementary mattress that was advertised as suitable for that brand of crib. What happened next was a tragedy that has been repeated too many times in this country. Davis' son suffocated when he got his head wedged between the outer wall of the crib and the mattress. Today, as President of Keeping Babies Safe, (www.keepingbabiesafe.org) a national non-profit organization, Davis speaks out about crib safety and the need for consumer safety regulations, so this tragedy need never be repeated.

"When I lost my son, there weren't any national laws overseeing crib and mattress safety," says Davis. Now, we have the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 that will help enforce more stringent policies on manufacturers and recall unsafe cribs from the market. The important thing for parents to know is that regardless of these new laws, most unsafe cribs have never been recalled. Knowledge is the best defense against these unsafe cribs and sleeping conditions and that is what Keeping Babies Safe provides to parents and the public at large."

In 2008, over a million cribs were recalled for safety reasons. This figure is likely to increase as the National Act is currently being interpreted. The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, including the crib section sponsored by Senator Diane Feinstein, which makes retailers of second-hand cribs responsible for selling safe merchandise, will go a long way to prevent these tragedies. But laws alone don't keep infants safe. Parents cannot rely on legislature to ensure their child's safety. Joyce Davis points out that parents must make sure that if they use a new crib, the parts and maintenance are in good order and if they are using a second-hand crib, it conforms to current safety standards. In addition, safe-sleeping practices should be adhered to.

"Between 2002 to 2004, 32 children died each year because of unsafe cribs," says Davis. "In 2006, 11,300 infants were injured in cribs and 1,100 injured in play yards and play pens*; most infant injuries or deaths occur in secondhand or hand me-down cribs. New cribs meeting the standards established by the Consumer Product Safety Commission are generally considered safe. However, unsafe cribs are still being sold in "secondary markets" such as thrift stores and resale furniture stores and a new crib with loose parts or screws can also be unsafe. Many cribs offered by hotels and motels are older models and also unsafe. The biggest tragedy about deaths or injuries caused by the cribs themselves is that they are completely preventable."

To that end, Keeping Babies Safe issues guidelines for parents to insure that cribs (both new and second-hand) are safe. Some of these guidelines include:

- **Crib Safety Slats must not be missing, cracked or loose. Crib Slats should not be more than 2-3/8 inches (60mm apart).**
- **Mattresses must be firm and tight fitting. Mattress support must not be easily released from headboard/footboard and should be able to withstand 25 lbs of upward force construction.**
- **Corner Posts should not be higher than 1/16th inch above the end panel railing.**
- **Screws, bolts or hardware, which secure crib components, must be intact, not loose or missing. The crib must be free of protruding rivets, metal nuts, bolts, knobs or wing nuts on all areas of the crib.**
- **There should not be any cutout areas on the headboard or footboard.**
- **Always place your baby to sleep on his/her back to reduce risk of SIDS.**
- **Never sleep with your infant. Co-sleeping is dangerous.**

In addition to providing these and other important guidelines for parents on crib and infant sleep safety, Keeping Babies Safe has mounted Project Safe Crib, a non-profit program designed to help parents from economically challenged environments obtain safe cribs through human service organizations around the country. Project Safe Crib purchases safe cribs at an industry discount and offers them to Health and Human Services organizations that have demonstrated a thorough training in safe crib practices. The cribs are brought into homes by these trained professionals and set up to the highest safety standards. In 2008, Project Safe Crib donated 350 cribs to families nationwide.

“Our goals are to maintain an informative website that educates parents about cribs and unsafe sleeping environments and to expand the important service that Project Safe Crib provides,” Davis says. “Keeping Babies Safe will continue to work as an advocate and information resource for parents to ensure that cribs and sleeping environments for children remain safe and that no one ever has to lose their child because of an unsafe crib.”

For more information about crib and sleeping safety, product recalls and current consumer crib safety legislation visit www.keepingbabiesafe.org. Keeping Babies Safe Toll Free telephone number 877-777-7523.

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- Source, Consumer Product Safety Commission

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