

Frequently Asked Questions on Licensing Rules Related to Infant Safe Sleep

Q: Can I use a bassinet?

A: No. The licensing rules prohibit the use of bassinets in child care settings. Child care providers can only use an approved crib or porta-crib. Child care homes can also use an approved play yard (such as an approved Pack 'n Play®). Bassinet attachments for play yards cannot be used.

Q: Can I use the Fisher Price Newborn Rock 'n Play™ Sleeper or a bouncy seat for sleeping infants?

A: No. Child care providers can only use an approved crib or porta-crib. Child care homes can also use an approved play yard (such as an approved Pack 'n Play®). Bassinet attachments for play yards cannot be used. Child care providers cannot use bouncy seats, car seats, swings or any other sleeping device for sleeping infants.

Q: If I can't use blankets, what do I do if a mother wants her infant swaddled?

A: Wearable blankets, such as sleeps sacks and sleep sacks with a swaddle attachment and swaddle wraps are acceptable alternatives to blankets and may be worn by infants when they are sleeping. Refer to the [examples](#) in the document below for more information on acceptable items.

Swaddling with sleep sacks with a swaddle attachment and swaddle wraps are allowed only for infants up to 2 months of age.

Note: The swaddle attachment for the sleep sack must be properly attached (Velcro) to the sleep sack prior to use. The Velcro on swaddle sacks and swaddle wraps must be attached securely and must be inspected every time the infant is checked while sleeping. R 400.1912 and 400.8188 require continual monitoring of the infant's breathing, sleep position and bedding and for possible signs of distress.

Q: Are there risks associated with swaddling?

A: Yes. There are risks associated with swaddling. They include:

- Swaddling too tightly or with the legs extended and adducted can cause developmental dysplasia of the hips.
- Swaddling can result in hyperthermia when the swaddling blanket is added to clothing the infant is already wearing.
- Tight swaddling can compromise the lungs and increase the respiratory rate.

- Accidental deaths have occurred when swaddled infants are placed on their stomach or roll to their stomach. (An infant may roll onto his/her stomach even if not regularly rolling.) Swaddled infants on their stomachs are unable to use their arms or upper bodies to push themselves off the mattress or to change their head and body position if they are in a position that could cause suffocation.

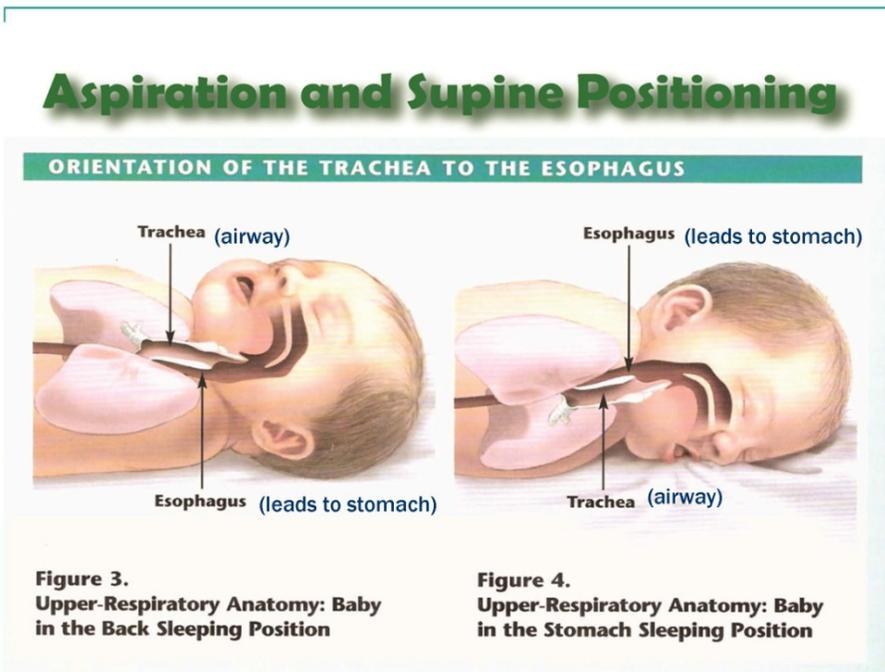
Due to these risks, it is recommended that infants not be swaddled in a child care setting. For more information, see the American Academy of Pediatrics Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards at <http://cfof.nrckids.org/>.

Q: When can children in care sleep with a blanket?

A: A child in care can use a blanket once he/she turns 1 year old.

Q: Will an infant choke if he spits up while lying on his back?

A: No. Infants are actually safer on their backs. When an infant is on his/her back, the airway (trachea) is on top of the esophagus (the tube that carries food). If a baby spits up while on his/her back, the food and fluid run back into the stomach and not to the lungs.



The following are examples of wearable blankets, such as sleep sacks, sleep sacks with swaddle attachment and swaddle wraps, that may be worn by infants when infants are sleeping. Swaddling with sleep sacks with a swaddle attachment and swaddle wraps is only allowed until the infant is 2 months old.

Note: The Velcro on sleep sacks with a swaddle attachment and swaddle wraps must be attached securely and must be checked every time the infant is checked while sleeping. Rules 400.1912 and 400.8188 require continual monitoring of the infant's breathing, sleep position and bedding and for possible signs of distress.

Sleep Sack



Sleep Sack with Swaddle Attachment

Note: The swaddle attachment for the sleep sack must be properly attached (Velcro) to the sleep sack prior to use.



Swaddle Wrap



Sleep Sack without Arms



Sleep Sack with Closed Arms



Licensed Child Care Safe Sleep Standards and Training Requirements

September 2018

Iowa law requires licensed child care providers to comply with infant-specific safe sleep standards and training requirements. These standards and training requirements are considered critical because unsafe sleep environments have been associated with a significant number of unexpected infant deaths in Iowa, including in licensed child care.

Key safe sleep standards and training requirements for licensed child care:

- Require a physician's directive for anything other than a back sleeping position by an infant.
- Allow an infant who independently rolls over to remain on stomach with signed parent statement.
- Clarify that nothing is allowed in the crib with the infant except a pacifier.
- Clarify that the definition of "infant" as being up to the child's first birthday.
- Outline allowable use of swaddling.
- Encourage in-person checks on sleeping infants at specific intervals and encourages the use of audio or video monitoring of sleeping infants.
- Require providers to perform monthly safety inspections of every crib.
- Require providers to check all their cribs' brand names and model numbers against the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site for unsafe cribs.
- Require staff persons, caregivers, and volunteers that care for infants to receive at least one-half hour training on reducing the risk of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) at least once a year.
- Require that, if an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib, the license holder must move the infant to a crib as soon as practicable, and must keep the infant within sight of the license holder until the infant is placed in a crib.
- Require that, when an infant falls asleep while being held, the license holder must consider the supervision needs of other children in care when determining how long to hold the infant before placing the infant in a crib to sleep.
- Require family child care providers to take "Supervising for Safety training" at orientation.

Safe sleep practices are key to infants' safety in licensed child care

Unsafe sleep environments are associated with nearly all unexpected deaths in Iowa, including infant deaths in licensed child care. Since 2002, over 70% of infant deaths in licensed child care occurred when the infant was in an unsafe sleep arrangement.

Since the 2013 implementation of these new standards and training requirements targeting safe sleep practices, deaths in licensed child care have decreased significantly. The Division attributes this decrease to enhanced infant safe sleep standards and training requirements, heightened awareness of safety issues, and publicity surrounding noncompliance resulting in infant deaths.

