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## Tips For Evaluating Your Drop Side Crib For Safety

A crib is one of the most important baby gear items parents can purchase. The latest safety recommendations from experts indicate that fixed side cribs should be used. If you are using a drop-side crib, the following tips can be helpful in evaluating its safety:

- Never use a crib made before 2000. They do not meet even today's lenient safety standards.
- Check your crib for recalls against the recall list at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). Register your crib with the manufacturer. Check a master crib recall list frequently. Sign up for crib recall alerts through child product recall e-mailings. You can sign up for recall alerts at [www.kidsindanger.org](http://www.kidsindanger.org) or [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).
- Be sure you have the instructions and part list. Replacement instructions can be obtained from the manufacturer.
- Cross check your crib with the owner's manual equipment list. Be sure all hardware is used properly. Make sure that **no** hardware is loose or missing. Evaluate your crib periodically during its use to ensure that mattress support hangers and other hardware are secure and working properly.
- Crib should be free of protruding rivets, metal nuts or bolts, knobs, and wing nuts.
- Make sure that joints and parts fit tightly and that wood is smooth and free of splinters.
- Make sure there is no cracked or peeling paint and that all painted surfaces are lead free.
- Check that drop side rails lock properly and securely when in the raised position.
- Plastic on the crib should not be cracked or "whitened" due to stress.
- Never use a crib that you have had problems with – such as the drop side coming loose on its own.
- Stop using a crib with loose or missing parts or hardware and contact the manufacturer.
- Be sure the mattress is tight-fitting – you should not be able to place 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib.
- Do not use the "drop side" feature. Keep the side of the crib up and in the stationary position to avoid wear and tear.
- This is not an exhaustive list and every crib is different. Have a professional child proofing expert check your crib.

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