

# Cots and Mats

**Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.30(1)(b)1.-4.** - Cots and Mats. Cots and mats shall be provided for each child who is two (2) years of age or older and who is required to take a nap and for each child under the age of two years who can climb out of a crib.

1. Cot and Mat Construction. Cots and mats shall be of sound construction and of sufficient size to accommodate comfortably the size and weight of the child. Mats must be in good repair, washable, covered with waterproof material and at least two inches (2") thick.
2. Individual Use. Cots and mats must be used by the same child daily and marked for individual use.
3. Sheets. Sheets or similar coverings for cots or mats shall either be marked for individual use or laundered daily. If marked for individual use, they must be laundered weekly or more frequently if needed.
4. Covers. A light cover shall be available for each child's use on a cot or mat and shall be marked for individual use or laundered daily. If marked for individual use, they must be laundered weekly or more frequently if needed.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.19(1)(b)1.-4.** - Cots and Mats. Cots and mats shall be provided for each child who is two (2) years of age or older and who is required to take a nap and for each child under the age of two years who can climb out of a crib or other equipment approved for infant sleep.

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## **Rule Type: Non-Core Rule**

### **Intent of the Rule**

To provide comfort to children and to protect their health and safety. To ensure sanitary conditions and to prevent the spread of infection within the child care program. To ensure that each child who is required to nap has individual sleeping equipment.

### **Clarification**

Children feel safe, secure, and comfortable when they each have their own individual mat or cot and their own individual bedding. To prevent children from sustaining injuries that can occur when they fall out of a crib, children should be transitioned to a cot or a mat at two years of age or earlier if they begin to climb out of the crib. Most toddlers can climb over the crib rail when they are approximately 35 inches tall and between 18 and 24 months of age; therefore, child program staff should closely monitor children's behavior.

Sleeping equipment must be appropriately sized for the child's body. To reduce the risk of injury to children, cots and mats must be free from hazards and in good repair. Sleeping equipment should be made with a waterproof material that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. Since mats used for sleeping are the sole barrier between the child and the floor, a two-inch (2") thick or thicker mat provides adequate cushioning and maximizes the child's comfort.

Lice, scabies, and ringworm are among the most common infectious diseases in child care. Providing separate sleeping equipment and bedding for each child and keeping these items clean can help prevent the spread of these diseases.

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## Indicators

- ✓ Cots and mats shall be provided for each child who is two (2) years of age or older and who is required to take a nap and for each child under the age of two who can climb out of a crib or other equipment approved for infant sleep.
  - Tip: Transition a child from a crib to a cot or a mat when:
    - The crib mattress is at the lowest setting and height of the crib rail is less than three-quarters of the child's height.
    - The child is able to pull himself/herself up and over the crib rail.
    - The child is able to put his/her leg on or over the crib rail, even if the child hasn't yet climbed over.
  - Note: It is acceptable for a one-year-old child who is walking and a child over eighteen (18) months who is not walking to be placed on a cot or mat for sleeping.
  - Reminder: Child care programs should ensure that cots and mats are in compliance with the current U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines. To check and/or to sign up for equipment recalls, visit <http://www.recalls.gov/>.
  
- ✓ Cots and mats shall be of sound construction and of sufficient size to accommodate comfortably the size and weight of the child. Mats must be in good repair, washable, covered with waterproof material and at least two inches (2") thick.
  - Tip: Routinely check sleeping equipment for potential problems. Cots and mats should be free of hazards such as loose or broken parts, missing or loose knobs and screws, sharp catches, cracked plastic, exposed padding material, ripped or loose seams, stretched or loose cot fabric, etc. It is not acceptable to use tape to cover cracks, rips, and tears. In addition, measure mat padding to ensure it has not compressed to a thickness of less than two inches (2").
  - Note: Cots and mats should accommodate the size of the child's body so that the child's head and feet fit comfortably on the sleeping equipment.
  - Recommendation: Sleeping equipment should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized when soiled, between uses by different children, and at least once a week regardless of use by one or more children.
  - Reminder: For child care programs that offer night-time care, a four-inch (4") mattress or a cot with a two-inch (2") pad must be provided for each child.
  
- ✓ Cots and mats must be used by the same child daily and marked for individual use.
  - Tip: In lieu of using a child's name, a labeling system can be used by marking each cot with a different number or symbol and assigning a number/symbol to each child. A list of names and corresponding numbers/symbols can be posted on a chart and updated as needed.

- ✓ Sheets or similar coverings for cots or mats should be marked for individual use or laundered daily. A light cover should be available for each child's use on a cot or mat and should be marked for individual use or laundered daily. If marked for individual use, sheets and covers must be laundered weekly or more frequently if needed (i.e., when soiled by toileting accidents, saliva, mucus, food, dirt, etc.).
  - Reminder: To ensure comfort for the child, sheets should cover the entire surface of the cot/mat to provide a barrier between the child's body and the sleeping equipment; covers should be large enough to extend from the child's shoulders to the child's feet and provide warmth.
  - Recommendation: Consider using fitted sheets designed specifically for the sleeping equipment used by the child care program since they are more likely to remain in place as children move around during rest time.
  - Note: Nap sacks and sleeping bags meet the requirement for the sheet and cover, but they are not a substitute for a cot or mat. These items can be used on top of cots and mats but not in place of them.
  - Tip: To help ease the transition between daily activities and naptime, consider allowing children to bring their own special blanket/cover from home. These items are subject to the same requirements as listed in the rule.

## **Resources:**

Caring for Our Children

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/index.cfm>

Environment Rating Scales Institute

<http://ersi.info/index.html>