

the baby furniture 101 guide

by simplybabyfurniture.com

At simplybabyfurniture.com we strive to offer you as many options as possible to furnish your babies nursery in any style or on any budget. We know that the dizzying array of products can leave you wondering what all these products do and if you need them.

Baby furniture 101 serves as a guide for the new busy mom to provide an overview of all of the available categories of furniture products for your babies' nursery.

Of course, you should be reassured by our 100% satisfaction guarantee.

We have made it simple for you to find and buy the right furniture for you. You can be reassured that all of our collections of baby furniture meet the highest standards of safety and comfort, so you can enjoy peace of mind while your baby enjoys a good night's sleep.

NOTE: this guide is informational only and you should consult your medical professional with any questions.

Cribs & Toddler Beds

Moses Baskets

A Moses basket is a woven basket with handles while the bassinet is typically a plastic woven basket on a stand. These are not an essential buy, but they certainly can make life easier in the first few months. You can use a crib from day one but both a Moses basket and bassinet are portable between rooms and both items fit easily into your own bedroom if this is where you want your baby to sleep during the early days. These are best for babies up to 3-4 months or until the baby is mobile.



Cradles

Cradles are a traditional piece of furniture that rock or swing to help sooth your baby to sleep. Some come with mattresses, many do not, but these can be bought separately. Bedding is generally purchased separately. Cradles are suitable for a baby up to around six months and should not be used once your baby can sit up, kneel or pull themselves into an upright position.

Cribs

Cribs are suitable for babies from birth. A NOTE ABOUT TWINS: If you have twins, many pediatricians recommend putting them in the same crib for the first four months.

Drop-Side

Many styles have mechanisms that allow you to lower or raise the side with one hand, while cradling your baby with the other. Cribs with one drop-side or a 'static' drop-side tend to be sturdier than cribs with two drop-sides.



Adjustable-Height Mattress Base

Most cribs have several height levels for the mattress – the highest setting is for when the baby is newborn and gradually as the baby grows you lower the mattress height to prevent the baby from climbing or falling out.



Castors

Two or four castors make your crib easier to move around. At least two must be lockable, and should always be locked when not in use.



Teething Rails

Clear non-toxic plastic fits over the top rail of the crib and protects your baby's gums once he's teething and has started to chew.



Convertible or Stages Cribs

Larger, with removable sides, so they can be converted into some combination of toddler bed, daybed or headboard and footboard for a full-sized bed. A good value choice, since crib beds have a longer life-span.



Travel Cribs

Folding cribs are perfect for traveling - some also double as a playpen. It's a good idea to get your baby used to sleeping in the crib for a few nights at home, before you travel. Many styles have removable, washable covers and fold away into a travel bag.





Toddler Beds

Toddler Beds are for toddlers who have learned how to climb out of the crib or for parents expecting a second child who will need the crib. Toddler beds can be used with a standard crib mattress, until the baby grows big enough to sleep on a traditional mattress size. This is not an essential piece of furniture, but bridges the gap between a crib and a regular bed. Many cribs are convertible which allows the crib to be converted to a toddler bed. See above convertible or stages cribs.

Furniture

Changing Tables

A changing table is a specially designed unit to use while changing your baby's diaper or clothing. It may not be an essential purchase as a simple changing mat may serve you just as well but it is very nice to have a specific area for storing diapers and diaper products and for being able to stand and change your baby.

Changing tables often include a storage area for diapers, wipes and creams, while those that combine a chest of drawers offer even better storage facilities. Look for ones with guard rails for extra security. . In general, you'll find that open shelves running the length of the unit are more convenient than small high-sided baskets.

This piece of furniture can be especially important if you have had a caesarean or anticipate trouble sitting and bending post delivery. If you intend to buy a changing table, make sure you buy it before your baby is born. It will be of most use in the early months and must be used with extreme caution once your baby can roll.



Chests of Drawers

Some of these are designed to double as a place for diaper changing and usually feature a plastic mat on top plus a raised section at the back and sides to protect the baby from falling. If you decide to use the chest of drawers as a changing table we would recommend a 3 draw model so that is at a good height for changing and that you use a lipped changing pad with a safety belt. If your budget permits, you can usually buy a chest of drawers to match your crib, and an Armoire too.

Combo Tower

Versatility is perhaps the important aspect of your nursery furniture because your baby won't be an infant forever. The combo tower offers both a changing area and storage for diapering essentials and toys or clothing. Putting a changing pad with safety belt on the lower end of the combo tower works great as a changing table. Many combo units also have a matching hutch that can be added later to transform the combo tower into a dresser and bookcase. All in all this is a great space saver and our favorite.



Armoires

There are wonderful Armoires available ranging from traditional wooden designs to hand painted motifs to fun curvaceous design. Some feature a low hanging rail so that a younger child can reach their clothes, and one or two shelves above for storage and some have easy access drawers below like this one pictured. A great compliment to a bigger room set and easily transitions from baby to toddler to child.

Nursing Chairs, Gliders, and Rockers

Rocking chairs have long been a fixture in the nursery because babies (and parents) find the back-and-forth motion soothing and sleep inducing. A glider is simply an updated rocking chair that most parents find much more comfortable – if you've never sat in one, you have a treat in store. The smooth-as-silk gliding motion requires almost no effort. Gliders tend to be safer than rockers because they sit flat on the floor instead of on rounded rockers that can pinch your child's toes, or yours. A rocking chair can be invaluable for rocking your baby to sleep.





Children's Play Furniture - Table

The small table from a table and chairs set can be very useful to keep near your nursing chair to hold drinking water for you when you're feeding your baby. As your baby grows older they will enjoy sitting at a child-sized table and you will appreciate that they can draw, paint and make messes in their own space. So, although it may seem a long way off, it's worth choosing one your child can use as a toddler and young child (even as a computer table) is a smart buy.

Toy Boxes and Storage

Keeping the nursery or the playroom free from clutter is made easy with a simple toy box. Before you know it you will have toys both soft and hard that you can stow in here. Look for toy boxes with a 'safety latch' that keeps the lid from shutting on little fingers. Some toy boxes also serve as a bench seat and is a great place for pretend play and for sitting on while putting on shoes.



Highchairs

Highchairs are a perfect place for feeding from birth until your child is more comfortable in a booster seat.

Feeding a fidgety baby or toddler can be hard work. A highchair can make life easier for you and more fun for your child. A highchair allows you to secure your child in position with a harness so you can then concentrate on the feeding. It can also give your child his earliest feelings of independence as they start to feed themselves, perhaps sitting alongside the rest of the family at meal times.

Room Accessories

Bouncers

Bouncers are a safe place to soothe, entertain and feed baby from birth until your child can sit unassisted (never use as a car seat). These are a great place for baby when you need a few "hands-free" minutes to fold laundry or answer the door. A seat that bounces with baby's own movement not only soothes, but also helps baby develop physical abilities. Because of their compact size, bouncers are easy to move from room to room—even into the bathroom so Mom can take a shower knowing baby is secure and entertained in the bouncer!



Lighting

Lighting for the nursery requires careful thought and planning. A dimmer for the main ceiling light is essential. If lamps are within toddler height, choose one designed for the nursery which has a hidden bulb and stay-cool exterior.

A nightlight or lamp is reassuring to your baby and useful for you when you go in at night. You can buy nightlight lamps or a nightlight that plugs into an electric socket to provide a small glow. Or you could simply use a lamp with a low watt bulb.

Mattresses and Encasements

Crib mattresses like adult mattresses vary in price. Some high priced mattresses offer all natural qualities others coil and others are basic foam with a vinyl covering. It really is your preference but we do suggest a firm mattresses for babies.

One thing you can do to help prevent your baby from having allergies is to use dust mite barrier bedding. Usually this is only needed with natural mattresses as most other mattresses have a vinyl cover which will act as a barrier—An encasement provides a barrier between your baby and the places dust mites live. A mattress encasement easily slips over your baby's crib mattress and under your stylish crib sheet to provide the ultimate in allergy relief and prevention.



Monitors

Every new mom will tell you tales of how they regularly rush to check on their new baby for no good reason - some inner instinct makes them anxious and forces them to stop what they are doing and go check their baby is ok. Monitors help take the anxiety out of this natural urge and can give parents peace of mind whatever they are doing and wherever they are around the house. The most basic monitors listen and transmit any sounds the baby makes, more sophisticated ones allow you to mute the sound but to see the level of noise coming from the baby via a visual lights display. The most cutting edge ones also allow you to view your baby via video links, even in a darkened room. Just which monitor you choose will depend on just how much you want to know about your baby. Very anxious moms, or those with very premature or at risk babies, will certainly find monitors which detect breathing and movement very reassuring. Most operate on two channels so you switch between channels to minimize interference.



Monitors come in 49 MHz, 900MHz and 2.4MHz technology. 49 MHz technology operates on a less-used channel. This means you're less likely to run into interference from home phones and other products that employ 900 MHz technology. 900 MHz and more recently 2.4 MHz technology offers more powerful signals, with excellent clarity and up to three times the range of most baby monitors.

Gates and Guards

Safety gates and guards can be invaluable once your baby becomes mobile. Position them at the top or bottom of a staircase or across a door opening and you can limit your child's exploration to a safe area. Styles vary and include those that secure to the wall at just one side and swing to open, those which are secured on both sides with an integral walk through gate section and those which work as barriers and have to be removed when you want to walk through.

All have their uses in certain situations and depending how regularly you are going to be going through the barrier different styles offer different benefits. Most important for those to be in regular use is the ease of opening and securing, and the stability of the fixings. Look for a very robust fit because toddlers will often push at the barrier or try to climb over it.



A pressure fit style is generally the quickest and easiest to install. Be aware that those with a floor level cross bar can present a tripping hazard which you need to be particularly careful. We do not recommend these at the top of stairs.

Also great as a pet or dog gate to keep puppy and baby apart when you can not be with them!
