



**Nursery
Equipment
Program
Guidelines**
November 2023

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Introduction

The Nursery Equipment Program (NEP) is part of Victoria's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service and provides additional support for eligible families. The Nursery Equipment Program provides safe nursery equipment for Victorian families experiencing vulnerability and where a safety concern has been identified by an MCH Nurse or an Aboriginal MCH service. The Nursery Equipment Program is fully funded by the State Government through the Department of Health.

The Victorian MCH Service is a free universal primary health service available for all Victorian families with children from birth to school age. The MCH Service consists of three components: Universal MCH program, the Enhanced MCH program and the 24-hour MCH Line.

Aboriginal MCH services support better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by giving families the choice to access culturally safe and welcoming MCH services at their local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO).

The Nursery Equipment Program is open to all clients of the MCH service, who meet the eligibility criteria.

These guidelines have been developed by the Department of Health to provide clear, standardised guidance to MCH services. Development of the guidelines has been informed in consultation with representatives of the MCH workforce across Victoria through a rapid review of the program undertaken by Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence, at the Department of Health (March 2021).

Successful implementation of the guidelines will assist with:

- establishing a consistent approach to the delivery of the NEP program
- providing clear pathways for MCH services to access the NEP program.

Nursery Equipment Program

The Nursery Equipment Program has been providing safe nursery equipment to vulnerable Victorian families since 2011. Together with appropriate education, the provision of a cot ensemble or a child car restraint has the potential to make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of children and their families.

This Victorian State Government funded program builds on the development of the MCH Safe Sleeping Checklist, which was driven by the landmark 2005 report by the Child Safety Commissioner, *Tackling SIDS – a community responsibility*.

All equipment provided through the Nursery Equipment Program complies with Australian Standards. All orders are processed through an online portal, with equipment being delivered and installed in the family / carer home by suitably trained and accredited installers.

Prior to placing an order on the Nursery Equipment Program portal, client information must first be entered into the Child Development Information System (CDIS).

Eligibility Criteria

There are strict eligibility criteria for the Nursery Equipment Program. For each eligible child, the program can provide:

- One cot ensemble and/or
- One child car restraint.

An eligible child is one who:

- is under the age of 12 months (including an unborn child with an estimated due date within 3 months of order date) and engaged in the Victorian MCH Service including the Aboriginal MCH Service
- has an identified safety concern on the Safe Sleeping Checklist that requires the purchase of new equipment and/or identified safe travel concern
- is part of a family with low income when a member in the household holds one of the following
 - a Commonwealth Health Care Card
 - a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
 - a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card
 - Refugee visa (subclass 200)
 - In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
 - Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
 - Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
 - Protection visa (subclass 866)
 - Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
 - Woman at risk visa (subclass 204)
 - Bridging visas, A-F

Additional considerations for eligibility include:

- is part of a family in which a family member identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- is a member of a family who are experiencing challenges with mental health issues, drug or alcohol dependency or family violence issues, which adversely impact on their ability to provide safe nursery equipment
- is part of a family with twins, triplets etc. who are experiencing financial hardship

Requests outside of eligibility

For requests that fall outside of the eligibility criteria, please email Kidsafe Vic nep@kidsafevic.com.au to lodge the exception request. Kidsafe Vic will follow up with the Department of Health for consideration.

Orders outside of the eligibility criteria must be considered and approved by the Department of Health before it is entered into the NEP online ordering portal.

Examples of orders outside of the eligibility criteria may include but are not limited to;

- Child over 12 months of age
- Children and families experiencing short-term vulnerability that do not meet eligibility criteria.

Where families are engaged with other services - for example, Child Protection (including Infant Intensive Response teams) or Family Services - nursery equipment brokerage must be sought through these services in the first instance. This is inclusive of children who are part of:

- families with an infant/s under 12 months through Child Protection Infant Intensive response teams
- families receiving services from Child FIRST or Child Protection
- families who are looking after children in kinship care arrangements (out of home care).

Early Parenting Centres also play a critical role in promoting and assessing safety in relation to sleep environments. If a risk has been identified by Early Parenting Centre clinical staff using the MCH Safe Sleeping Checklist, they will need to refer the family back to their Maternal and Child Health Service for referral to the Nursery Equipment Program.

Parent / Carer Consent

The MCH nurse and/or Aboriginal MCH Nurse/Health Practitioner must discuss the Nursery Equipment Program with the family and gain their consent to participate. This verbal consent is documented on CDIS and on the NEP Portal and must include consent to:

- Share personal information with Kidsafe Vic & Installer so that Nursery Equipment Program services and goods can be provided and installed. Personal information will include:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Contact phone number
 - Child Age / Estimated Due Date

Budget

MCH Services are allocated an annual budget by Kidsafe Vic and are responsible for managing orders within this budget. Budgets are monitored and reviewed by both Kidsafe Vic and the Department of Health.




The overall budget is based on approximately 2 percent of the children in the state so the eligibility and prioritisation of NEP for the local area will need to be managed by the MCH Coordinator.

If a service would like to request a change or adjustment to their budget, they should contact Kidsafe Vic nep@kidsafevic.com.au with the reason for request. Kidsafe will review and provide feedback.



Equipment

MCH services can order the following products for eligible children, which all comply with Australian Safety Standards.

Child Car Restraints

Product Name	Age Range	Image	Description
Safe-n-Sound QuickFix (PILOT ONLY - LIMITED AVAILABILITY)	Birth - 4 years (approx.)		Compact rear facing for 12+ months, converts to forward facing up to 3-4 years (approx.). ISOFIX or seat belt installation. Includes easy adjust harness.
Safe-n-Sound SafeKeeper II / SafeGuard II	Birth - 4 years (approx.)		Rear facing for 12+ months, converts to forward facing up to 3-4 years (approx.). Seat belt installation only - not suitable for ISOFIX.
Safe-n-Sound Urban Gro II	2 years - 8 years (approx.)		Harnessed forward facing car seat with top tether. Guidance: Best choice for a child who has outgrown height marker for rear facing seat.
Safe-n-Sound Hi-Liner Tethered Booster Seat	4 years - 8 years (approx.)		Tethered booster seat - must be secured to the anchor point. Can only be used with a lap-sash belt. Guidance:
Safe-n-Sound Tourer Untethered Booster	4 years - 8 years (approx.)		Lightweight untethered booster- to be used in vehicles that have no anchor points in the rear seat e.g. 7 seater SUVs.

Cot Ensembles

Product Name	Image	Description
Sunbury Tiburon Cot (Full Size) & Mattress + Protector		Specifications: 110cm (H) x 78cm (W) x 137cm (L) Standard size cot with mattress. Internal two handed drop side mechanism. Mattress protector included.
Sunbury Compact Cot & Mattress + Protector		Dimensions: 105cm (H) x 69cm (W) x 109cm (L) Compact size cot with mattress, better choice for small spaces. Features single drop side. Mattress protector included.

Special Requests

Exception Items

- Cot frame only (full size and compact)
- Cot mattress only (full size and compact).

In circumstances where the above items are requested, the MCH Nurse must contact Kidsafe Vic nep@kidsafevic.com.au to discuss the request. This discussion will require details of the existing equipment that they would be paired with, such as exact dimensions, photos and other information to ensure the goods are compatible and meet Australian Safety Standards and will not pose a safety risk such as entrapment to the child. Once safety risks are assessed and items deemed suitable, the order will be raised by Kidsafe Vic on behalf of the MCH Nurse. The MCH nurse will be able to view the order on the online portal.

Requesting child car restraints when a family don't own a car

Requests for a child car restraint for families that do not own a car must be emailed to nep@kidsafevic.com.au. Approval will be sought from the Department of Health. If approved, the family / carer must be willing to be shown how to correctly install the child car restraint by an accredited fitter / installer. This would include the installer setting the child car restraint into the correct mode for the child and demonstrating how to correctly install into the car.

When considering ordering a child car restraint for a family that don't own a car, the MCH Nurse must discuss the following with the family / carer:

- Does the client have a valid licence?
- Will the child car restraint be staying in one car or be taken in and out when needed?
- Does the family / carer always put the car seat in the same car or in a number of different cars? Do they all have anchor points?
- The family / carer must be willing to sign off that they have been shown how to correctly install the child car restraint by the accredited fitter / installer.

Ownership of Equipment

Once the equipment provided via the Nursery Equipment Program has been installed, the items are the property of the family for whom they were ordered. The family will be responsible for all ongoing maintenance and adjustments as outlined by the Installer and the product instruction manuals.

Installers

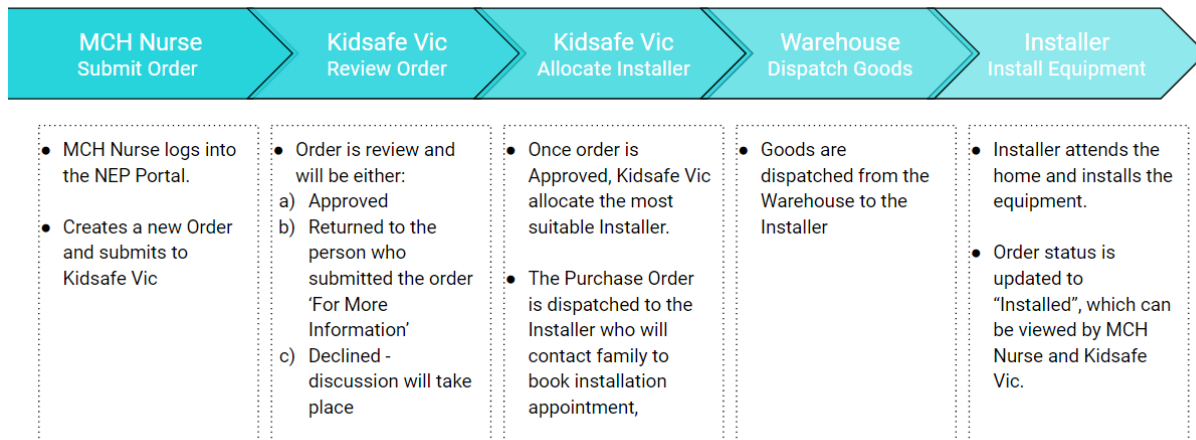
All Installers will be subcontracted directly with Kidsafe Vic, who will manage the allocation of an installer to each order.

All Installers will have minimum accredited and general training requirements. This includes:

- Successfully completed the 52862WA Accredited course in Type 1 Child Car Restraint Fitting
- Have minimum 20 hours experience fitting child car restraints
- Cot assembly training
- Completion of Kidsafe Vic Short Course in injury prevention certificate.

The installer will have the name and contact number for the referring MCH Nurse/service, in case contact regarding the appointment or installation is required.

Order & Installation Process



Submitting an Order: MCH Nurse/ MCH Service

MCH services with an allocated NEP Portal Log in can place orders for themselves, or on behalf of other team members.

All Orders are submitted via the [NEP Portal](#)

<https://www.kidsafevic.com.au/professionals/nursery-equipment-program/>

- Orders received by 12pm will be processed on the same business day.
- Orders after 12pm may be processed the following business day.

Approving an Order and Allocating Installer: Kidsafe Vic

Once the MCH service has submitted the Order in the NEP Portal, Kidsafe Vic will:

- Review the order and ensure all relevant information is included. If any additional information is required, they will contact the requester for further information.
- Allocate an Installer
- Send a Dispatch Request to the Warehouse to ship the equipment to the Installer.
 - Dispatch requests sent to Warehouse:
 - By 12pm will be dispatched the same day,

After 12pm will be the next business day.

Delivery of Equipment

Nursery equipment will be delivered from the Warehouse directly to the Installer. The Installer will take the items to the home for the installation appointment. No equipment will be delivered directly to the family. The Installer will ensure appropriate disposal of packaging at the end of the installation appointment.

Booking Appointment & Installing Equipment: Installer

The allocated Installer will receive the NEP Order via the Portal.

The installer will:

- Contact the family within 2 business days to book an installation appointment.
 - Metro Families: Appointment will be made within 1 - 4 business days
 - Regional Families: Appointment will be made within 2 - 8 days
- On completion of installation, the Installer will be required to take photos of installed equipment and request a family member to sign off.
- Update the order status once equipment has been installed.

What happens if an Installer is unable to contact the family?

The Installer will continue to attempt contact for 2 business days. If no contact can be made, they can either contact the MCH service directly to check details are still current or request assistance from Kidsafe Vic.

If no response from MCH Nurse within 7 business days, the order will be cancelled and the MCH Nurse notified.

What happens if the child car restraint needs to be installed at an alternate location?

If there is a reason for which installation needs to occur at a location other than the residential address of the family / carer, then the MCH service must add a comment on the order to advise of the suggested installation address.

Note: Cots must be assembled in the home.

How to place an order if no internet services are available?

In exceptional circumstances where there is no access to the internet, or if there is a system outage of the NEP Portal, the referring MCH service can call Kidsafe Vic via phone and place the order. All required information will need to be provided.

Timeframe for Equipment Installation

Families in Metro areas

Once an order has been received by Kidsafe Vic, equipment will be installed within 7 business days.

Families in Regional areas

Once an order has been received by Kidsafe Vic, equipment will be installed within 14 business days.

Equipment Return Process

If an Installer finds any piece of equipment to be faulty, Kidsafe Vic must be notified immediately via phone and return / replacement of items will be arranged.

Recommended MCH Nurse Follow Up After Installation

It is strongly recommended that once the MCH service receives notification that the equipment has been installed at the family home, that the MCH nurse have a discussion with the family about cot and travel safety at the next visit. They should be able to view the items at a home visit, or engage in a discussion using the MCH Safe Sleeping checklist if at a centre visit. A recently revised MCH Safe Sleeping checklist should be provided to the client if they no longer have their original copy.

Occupational Health & Safety Considerations

The MCH Nurse when discussing the Nursery Equipment Program with the family:

- Must ensure they include assessment of OHS questions / risks and provide the response within the NEP Portal.

If the MCH Nurse is aware of any risks, identified either by their service or other external services (e.g., antenatal services), then these must be included in the NEP Order. This information is important to the safety of the installers who are going into the home. As installers are transporting items of up 25kg into the home, it is important they are aware of any access issues such as flights of stairs with no lift access, nearby parking etc.

- Ask about the car type the child car restraint will be installed into:
 - o Is the car a 5-seater, or 7-seater, or Dual Cab Ute?

This information will assist the installer understand any potential issues with the installation of the seat or flag accessories that may be required.

Nursery Equipment Program Contacts

Kidsafe Vic

E: nep@kidsafevic.com.au

Ph: (03) 90362306

General NEP queries, feedback and complaints, including online portal, ordering, delivery or installation processes.

Department of Health: Maternal and Child Health Program

E: mch@health.vic.gov.au

Enquiries regarding NEP related policy, guidelines and statewide leadership to the Department of Health.

Attachment 1

Background

Each year, a proportion of infant deaths in Australia are attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, (SIDS). International research has identified that SIDS is strongly associated with unsafe infant sleeping arrangements/ equipment, predominantly with co-sleeping, sleeping on unsafe surfaces such as couches, infant positioning, and types of bedding in the sleeping area¹. A 2012 Victorian Coroners report identified unsafe sleeping environments as strongly linked to unexplained infant deaths and recommended public health campaigns focus on embedding safe sleep messages in the community. The report recommended that “financial constraints must not impede the provision of a safe sleeping environment”², noting that this was an appropriate role for the government.

The number of infants dying from SIDS in Australia has markedly decreased since these factors were identified and safer sleeping policies and practices have been widely communicated and reinforced by public health services such as MCH services.

In the Victorian context, the 2018 report, *Victoria’s Mothers, Babies and Children* identified that of the 26 SUDI deaths of infants under one year of age, 11 infants (42 per cent) were co-sleeping in an adult bed or on a mattress on the floor at the time of their death, and one of the non-co-sleeping infants (7 per cent) was not in a safe bed designed for infants³.

In addition to the risk of unsafe sleeping practices, infants are particularly vulnerable to injury when involved in a vehicle accident without a safe child car restraint (‘car seat’). It is mandatory that infants and young children under 7 are properly restrained in a car seat or booster meeting specific safety standards in Victoria. There were 12 deaths of children (aged 28 days to 17 years) from motor vehicle accidents in Victoria in 2018⁴.

Within Australia, the AS/NZS 2172 safety standard applies to cots and the AS/NZS 1754 safety standard applies to child car restraints. However, while a range of accredited infant safety equipment meeting these standards is readily available, such equipment is expensive to purchase and may be out of reach for some vulnerable families.

It is also essential that safety equipment be properly assembled (cots) and installed (car seats), and which requires a level of specialist knowledge and skill that not all families may possess or be able to obtain. In addition, cultural infant sleeping practices in some communities may not conform to these evidence-based safe sleeping practices. In such instances affordability may not be the key issue, but there may be value in providing equipment to promote a safer sleeping environment where a family meets the eligibility criteria⁵.

Recommendations from the Child Safety Commissioner’s 2005 report, *Tackling SIDS – a Community Responsibility*, led to the establishment of the Nursery Equipment Program (NEP) as an adjunct to the MCH Safe Sleeping Checklist. The NEP was initially established and managed by the Department of Education and Training (DET) in 2011 and was transferred as part of Machinery of Government changes in 2019. As of 1 February 2021, the NEP is managed by the Department of Health (DH).

¹ An accessible summary of international research and public health messaging on safe sleep practice can be found at <https://rednose.org.au/section/advocacy-and-research>

² Victorian Coroner, *Inquest into the death of Baby J*, COR20102580

³ The Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity (2019) *Victoria’s Mothers, Babies and Children*. Safer Care, Melbourne.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Families must still meet NEP eligibility criteria.