

GARAGE SALES

Outfitting a Nursery

Having a new baby is an expensive proposition on the best days. But you can save some money by using garage sales to outfit your little one's room.

Garage sales are full of families' cast-offs that still have plenty of life left. However, there are some things to watch out for.

CRIBS

Where your little one will sleep should be a safe haven beyond question. However, some cribs aren't safe. Nemours KidsHealth.org says not to use cribs with a drop rail. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission banned the sale of drop-side rails, and they are no longer safe to use. Slats on the crib should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart to protect babies from falling out and toddlers getting their heads stuck. Corner posts must be flush with the top of the headboard and footboard or more than 16 inches away from them. Anything in between could be a choking hazard.

Don't consider any crib more than 10 years old because they may not meet the most recent safety standards. Cribs made before 1978 may have finishes that contain lead, so find another use for any heirloom cribs that you come across, no matter how beautiful they may be.



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FURNITURE

Other furniture can be fair game, just be aware of finishes over a certain age. Have a plan for refinishing pieces to make them safe for your baby's room. Chairs and tables are also OK to reuse if you follow the same safety protocols.

Clean each item well before bringing it in and be prepared to refinish and repair where needed. It may seem like a lot of work, but, in the end, you'll have a beautifully customized nursery for a fraction of the cost.

Storage is always a must in a baby's room. Look for bookshelves, armoires, cabinets, dressers and other high-quality pieces that can stand the test of time. Make sure they're securely fastened to the walls so that your tot can't tip them over.

DECOR

Thrifted decor is also great to use as long as the items are baby-safe. Garage sales are usually full of used books which are great deals for stocking a library for your little one. Wall art and

other pieces (baby-safe, of course) are also great finds. Think outside of traditional nursery pieces like teddy bears or toys and look for pieces that can have a longer lifespan. Simple is better (and more flexible, long-term). Look for frames that you can fill with print-and-frame pieces off Etsy or art that you've found elsewhere.

Quilts, blankets and throws are also fair game, so long as they're kept out of baby's crib. Launder them well and ensure they have no loose strings or fringe that can hurt your child.

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BUYER'S TIP

Shopping for Safe Toys

Garage sales are great places to score toys. Just make sure they're in good working order and haven't been recalled. Baby-safe toys shouldn't have small pieces that are choking hazards and should be easy to clean.

AD SPACE