Episode Intro and Overview

So to recap, the baby furniture items you actually need are a place for your baby to sleep, a places to set your in each room, some stuff to take care of your babies' everyday needs, stuff for travel, and some baby proofing items.

Hi, you're listening to season four of the Baby Manual Podcast, the podcast that helps new parents all over the world navigate the everyday challenges that arise when you have a young baby.

This season will help you decide which pregnancy, baby, and toddler items you actually need and which ones are a waste of time and money. I'm pulling on the knowledge of hundreds of thousands of new parents around the world, other pediatricians, doctor moms, the Academy of Pediatrics, breaking pediatric news sites, all to give you the best information and recommendations that I can, because I know how overwhelming it can be.

I am your host, a pediatrician, mom, and author, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello, welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual Podcast. Today we're going to be talking about what furniture you actually need to get and what big items before your baby is born.

So first of all, we have a couple of different categories. I'm going kind of generally categorize them as newborn sleep stuff and then furniture that you're gonna use as a parent very often.

And then some places to put the baby in every room and travel stuff. Then baby-proofing stuff at the very end, of course. So for newborn sleep stuff, we always think a crib first off, right?

Crib and Bassinet Sleep Setup

And most of the cribs nowadays are actually a three-in-one. So the crib is up high when you first get it, or first put it together, I guess. And then you can lower the mattress down so that it can become a crib when they get older, they can still use that same crib.

Then you remove the front part of that crib and there's a shorter guard rail that you put on there and turn it into a toddler bed. so that toddlers can climb in and out of that bed on their own safely.

And then after that phase, typically the front and back parts of the crib become the headboard and footboard for a twin size bed. So that's the pretty standard nowadays for cribs to all have those features.

The slats are all a very standard distance apart so they're all safe for sleep. So you do need a crib. But here's the thing, your baby's not going to be sleeping in it, probably for at least the first 6 to 12 months, depending on recommendations.

Always look up the newest recommendations, but at the time of this recording, we say that the baby should be in the same room as parents, in a different sleeping surface than the parents for the 1st 12 month of life.

They're looking at making that a little bit earlier, somewhere in the four to six month range. They are talking about moving baby into a separate room and moms and babies will sleep better when we do that.

But as of right now, that's not the official recommendation yet. Anyways, you still don't need that crib for a very, very long time. So what you actually do need before your baby is born is a bassinet.

So you will need a crib eventually, right? A bassinet is a smaller bed for your baby that is safe for them to sleep in. And I recommend one that goes in the bedroom.

I really like the Halo brand of bassinets because they go over the bed. They have like an arm that comes over that

bed to hold the basset up higher so you can reach it really easily from bed and it doesn't take up a lot of space in a room.

Some of the bassinets, even though they're much smaller than cribs, they actually do take up quite a lot of floor space and they can be hard to fit in.

So I like this brand in particular. As a reminder, all of the links to my favorite ones of all these things or sometimes just to the general one if I don't have a favorite are going to be in the show notes.

And so you can always find those afterwards. All right, so for travel bassinets, I do recommend one of these as well. We used it even if you're not planning on traveling.

So we used at home a lot when all my babies were very first born. These ones, the travel bassinets that I like best are the ones that fold up the kind of clamshell style.

And when you unfold it, there's a hard edge around it so that it gets stiff. It holds the edges of it up so it's not going to collapse. The bottom of is just a flat and stiff sleep surface that is safe for babies to sleep on.

It's something that you can put on top of a bed or you could put it on the floor. You can even use it like we would just put in on a couch when we were sitting on couch next to it so that, you know, baby couldn't fall off, of course, but it's just a nice little like sleeping surface for them to lay in when they're very little.

And we used it also to change the baby and so it became like our little changing table after he up grew it for this last baby. So yeah, I definitely love having those travel bassinets.

They're getting harder to find. The ones that I've seen lately have mesh that comes with them, like a mosquito netting, and those are not safe to put over babies while they're sleeping.

So it's okay if you're directly observing your baby. Like the only time I would really use that is if your camping and your and baby falls asleep and they are very little and you put them in the shade in this travel Bassinet with the net over it.

or if you're in a place that has, you know, insects that carry diseases that could be getting to your baby and they need to be protected, then yeah, that's an option.

But for the most part, you don't need and shouldn't put mesh over a baby's sleeping surface. It can be more dangerous. Along these same lines, are going to need some sheets to go with these sleeping places.

So when you're getting sheets for The Crib or for THE BASINET, You need get ones that are made for that brand specifically or that the exact size. Now, cribs are pretty standard sizes, at least in the United States, and so you can just get a crib sheet and it's going to fit.

They should fit nice and snug. It should be tight. There you should not bunch up because when sheets and blankets and things get bunched up, that's when they become suffocation hazards.

Safe Bedding and Sleep Environment

And sorry, I said blankets just there because we don't want blankets in bed with the baby. So things that you should not get, apart from blankets, don't get any pillows.

Babies cannot sleep with pillows until they are two years old, and they can't have blankets until at least one year old. You don t want any bumpers in the crib.

So those bumper are things around the edges on the inside. They don' t make them anymore, but you might have seen them. They're just sort of a soft, it looks like a nice padded thing so that your baby won't bump up against the

side.

And along that same line, any mesh that lines the crib also should not be used. I get the idea because you don't want your babies arms and legs getting caught through the slats or whatever, but it doesn't happen.

The slats are all the right distance and the safest way for them to sleep is with nothing in the crib or bassinet. You need a very tight fitting sheet that goes with it over it, but no other sheets, blankets, nothing else.

They're allowed to have a pacifier and they can have sleep sack or sleep suit on their body, But nothing. All right. And you also don't want anything that hangs over the crib.

So things like mobiles or even, you know, artwork on the walls, shelves, vinyl stickers for the wall, these are all things that could potentially fall into the baby's crib and could pose a suffocation hazard.

And so, sorry, and you don t need anything to go over your baby. If you do want any decorations or things in the room, just make sure they're not over-the-bed.

You also don't need necessarily a white noise machine or blackout curtains. I have a lot of mixed feelings about these, but I would say try without them first.

And if your baby's a terrible sleeper or if baby wakes up to every little thing, then you might consider getting one or both of those. But to start off with, you don't need to train your baby to sleep with blackout curtains or with a white noise machine.

And I'd say it actually builds sort of a bad habit in that they can become dependent on it. Then if you go to travel or they go the grandparents' house or if they for a sleepover when they get bigger, it's a lot harder for them to fall asleep.

So starting off, we don' t need those sorts of things. You also don't need any like devices that play music to your baby as they're falling asleep and you don' need anything that emits light in your babies room like screens, you dont need TVs, any sort of electronic devices, that light up.

because those are all going to interfere with baby sleep. If you do want a nightlight in your baby's room, I would suggest one that is amber-colored or orange- colored.

Or even red, actually, because red at night, when you go in, your eyes can adjust to red light, but it's not as harsh and it doesn't wake you up as much.

It's the softest of lights. And then a yellow or amber or an orange colored light is sort of next best. That's just because When you're changing baby at night and or if baby wakes up a little and is falling back asleep at Night, the red and amber colored light will sort of tell your brain it's time to still be asleep.

Whereas blue light or white light, or light that comes from electronic screens, kind of tricks your Brain into thinking it is daytime and tells your body it s time To wake up.

And so that will make it harder to fall back Asleep. All right, so then some furniture that the parents are gonna use. A glider, you wanna get a good gliding rocking chair, one with a foot stool that also glides, I would suggest, because those are just so comfortable.

You're gonna spend a lot of time sitting and feeding your baby in it. A nursing pillow is useful even if you're not breastfeeding. When you are bottle feeding babies, you want to sit with them in this position, in your arms, like a cradle position.

And when you holding them, your shoulders go up and they get really tense over time. So the best position to feed a baby is one where you relaxed and your shoulder are back and low and you arms are as relaxed as possible.

But you still want that baby to be where, where can you see them looking at you right at arms length. a breastfeeding pillow holds them in that nice position with your arm.

It goes under your arms and it supports your as you hold your baby and feed them. So it's really comfortable. They'll save your back. My two favorite brands are the Boppy, which is really just your basic C-shaped pillow.

You can move it in any position. Its really easy to reposition and use. And my breast friend pillow, That one is a little bit of a harder or stiffer foam inside.

And so it holds your baby a bit better. It's a flatter surface and it has a pocket on it which is really useful and buckles around your waist. So if you need to get up and move a lit bit, it kind of moves with you.

Parent Furniture and Baby Monitors

That's kind nice to have. Those are my favorite two breastfeeding pillows of all the ones that I've tried. You should also get a baby monitor. There are basically two types of baby monitors.

They're the video ones, which usually connect to a phone and you just pull it up on an app to watch your baby. And then there are those kind of passive listening, almost like walkie talkie type of ones where just the sound comes through and those can be always on if they're plugged in.

So I actually would suggest both if you can get the one that's like the Sound one. just for listening for like when you're around the house, when baby's sleeping, and just so you are constantly listening to make sure you know right when they wake up, right?

And then the video one is good for when want to check in on them and see what's happening. So like sometimes you'll hear them fussing or moving a little bit and you like, oh, are they awake or are just repositioning?

Then you can look on the Video Monitor and check it. I'd like to have both of those. Things that you don't necessarily need that I see a lot of parents getting, baby bathtubs are kind of useless.

I feel like when they're really little, you could bathe them in the sink even. You really just need a basin or a small thing of water, or you can hold them into the shower.

Or you climb into shower or the bathtub with the baby and hold him in there and wash them. So the babys tubs, where they kind sit in I don't find them as useful.

I think that the ones that there are seats for the baby to sit in in your bathtub, those are a little more helpful. So the one's that are kind of a reclined position that your baby can sit into and it's like a mesh or a rubber for water to go through it and you can like wash them while they're sitting and lying there.

Those are kinda handy to have. And they are pretty small too. They don' t take up a whole lot of space. But you don t need like an actual bathtub for a baby.

So you do need a place for the baby to sit in every room that is safe or place that you can set your baby down in. Every room. So some of the things that I would suggest for that, the mamaru when your, baby is really little.

so the first couple of months before they're rolling, The Mamaru is a rocker that it's sort of shaped like a nest and sort, of a pod shape and it rocks back and forth gently.

And it feels like. they're in your arms. So there's like, I don't know, six different patterns or something that you can choose from and just different rocking patterns.

It's a swinging back and forth or a bumping as you're swinging or figure eight kind of patterns and I found that those are really, really handy when the babies are small.

And then when they get a little bit bigger, a baby swing that they can sit in is really fun for them. You should also have a bouncy chair for each room.

And I mean, I say bouncy. I don't know if that's like the right name for it, but the thing that almost is like a hammock chair where it's, you know, they're sitting in it but it has like, a buckle that holds them back and they are kind of half reclined, like maybe at like 30 to 45 degree angle.

Those are really great when they're small and you just need a safe place to set them down for a short time while you're looking at them. So like while on the toilet or while are cooking something in the kitchen or eating something.

Like just for couple of minutes to put them in and watch them, these are not safe places for your baby to sleep. If they fall asleep in it, you need to take them out and put on to a sleep safe sleeping surface.

They're just a place set your babies down safely while your watching them and doing something else. An exersaucer is really nice when your baby is able to sit up on their own.

So when they're around six months old to nine months, old, they can start sitting in that exer saucer and, you know, reach for all the little toys around them.

It's like a little activity center for them we. would jokingly call it the baby office saying, you're going to do some work in your office. Those are really great.

The babies love those. A Johnny jump up is really fun when they're first learning to kick their legs. So that's also like around six months of age. When they get happy and excited, they do those happy kicks.

You can put them in the Johnny, jump-up. It's like a a thing that clips onto the door frame and has like a seat below it and there's like, a spring and a rope that like hold the seat.

I don't know if I'm explaining that well, but the baby gets can get in that and like when they kick their legs, they bounce up and down and they just love that.

So that's really fun. You don t need it. It's not necessary for baby development. You don't need to be strengthening your baby's legs like that, the Exersaucer.

You know, you don' necessarily need them. There's just other places to put your babies that it's fun for the baby to begin. The Bumbo Seat I really like for when babies are sitting with support, so like around four to eight months of age.

babies who need a little extra support to sit, the bumbo just kind of holds them in a nice position and helps them to set up right. And some babies like to play in that position.

Again, this is not like necessary for development or anything. It's not a milestone they have to hit. Like they can sit with support with your hands. You don't need to be like practicing sitting supported.

And some child development specialists and pediatricians are a little against seats like this for babies because they do force them to sit in that position when they're not able to get on their own.

So they are okay for playing in short periods of time or a place to set your baby, again, while you are doing something that is right there where you can watch them, but you need to also be using your hands for yourself, like eating.

You don't need to get any activity mats. So those things that, you know, lay on the ground that have like the sort of arches over them and the toys hanging down, they take up a lot of space.

They're basically useless. You could just use like a blanket and toys on a floor. Um, You dont need those at all.

You don't want those baby loungers that are round or U shaped pillows, the ones that lay on the bed.

They are called like a nest or a pod or things like that. If they are made out of pillows there's suffocation hazard and they should not be used at all.

Like I wouldn't even have it in your house like while you're watching the baby. It's just, I know it looks nice because it looked really comfortable and soft and it is really soft, but because its soft it's dangerous for babies to be in.

And remember don't ever leave your baby unattended in any of these places that I just mentioned for your to sit down.

Baby Seating and Play Items

Its really a safe place to put your babies while your watching them. Okay, so then travel stuff. You need a playpen and the pack and play is the most popular.

There are now just like so, many different types of playpens and pack-and-plays and really any travel play pen is fine. It should be baby safe. So what you're looking for in a Play Pen is something that goes on the inside that lays down like a mat that folds down, that's fairly stiff.

You don't necessarily need a sheet with these, but if you are gonna put a seat in it for your baby to sleep in, make sure it's one that is made for that one specifically.

Because again, we don' want it bunching up because that suffocation hazard. With the play pens, you don''t need to play pen that has a bassinet in. It's just not as safe.

Like it is so much safer just to put your babies down inside the pen to I don't like those bassinet ones. There are many other features that are optional with these play pens.

You can decide if you want any of them. Honestly, really, I just like the inside part of the play pen. I think that's the easiest, the safest. you can always put your baby in there, you'll use it for several months.

So you could put them in with toys when they get bigger. It's a nice safe place to contain your babies. And you use that as a travel bed for your infants.

That's nice. The portable seat with a tray for feeding like a portable high chair, they have these ones that you can set it on the floor or it has like buckles and you could buckle it onto a chair.

So you use it at a restaurant or in a hotel or wherever you travel to or you just set in on a floor. have your baby. So there's buckles that go around a chair and then there are buckls that goes around baby to hold them in there and a tray that clips on.

These are great. Great for feeding, for travel and also great for playing even at home. You can set it on the floor, put your babies on it and put some toys on that tray and they can play with that.

That can be a fun, useful thing to have. Some muslin baby blankets are useful as a travel thing. You don't want to use baby blanket so you remember for sleeping, but having a muslim blanket or just a big baby that you can use, you could throw it on the ground like a picnic blanket.

If you're in the park for the baby to sit on or lay on, You can put it over those changing stations in public bathrooms so that your baby's not laying directly on that changing station.

You can use it for, you know, covering the, like making shade for your baby when they're in their stroller, when you're outside, all kinds of uses. You use as a nursing cover.

So muslin baby blankets are really useful for things that are not a blanket, if that makes sense. I suggest getting a handful of those. You can also get a portable changing pad.

Those, I feel like we used ours a lot, especially at the beginning. Also on top of those changing stations, if we didn't have a blanket or on the ground, you know, if we need to change baby or in the back of the car or over the cars seat.

It's just sort of a foldable waterproof surface, but it also holds diapers and wipes and cream and your cream spatula and whatever else you need. And there's a hand sanitizer.

So it's like a couple of just like little pockets attached to it. Um, so it was really just the essentials for changing and those can be really handy.

Also, we're gonna wanna probably get a baby carrier of some sort. So I would recommend getting a ring sling. They're very easy to use. It's a really good like first baby-carrier and it's useful for a lot of different sizes of babies.

Like as your baby grows, you can use the same ring-sling the whole time. And then maybe also getting clip carrier. The ones that have clips, they kind of go on like backpacks.

There's pretty easy-to-put-on. I like the ones also clip around your waist and have like a chest or back clip. you know, support clip on it, they can be kind of tricky to figure out and they fit kind like jeans.

So I would say if you can, go to a secondhand shop or ask a friend who has a baby carrier and try a couple of different styles and brands and see one that fits your body before choosing one.

With a ring sling, you don't have to do that. They're all the same and highly adjustable and comfortable on everybody and very easy. Again, my favorite.

All right, baby proofing items. So things that I would suggest definitely for babyproofing, wall anchors for furniture. Wall anchors are things that you stick it to the furniture and to wall so that if your baby starts to pull up on something, like when they're learning how to stand, or if they are starting to climb, if the climb on a bookshelf, a chest of drawers, they pull the drawers out and then start to claim on those, the whole dresser can fall over and babies can get crushed and killed by furniture.

It's really scary, really dangerous, so definitely you should get furniture anchors. Outside of that, baby gates are the next, I'd say, most important thing.

So babygates are to keep your baby away from the most dangerous areas of the house.

Travel Gear and Portable Essentials

The best way to baby proof a room is to give a baby out of their room. If you have a baby gate in front of the stairs, they can't fall down the steps, right?

So gates in from of stairs in-front of any rooms that you don't want them getting in and out of, you can put them in the door frame even of those rooms.

Or you could use them. You could put baby gates around a pool. So pools should always be gated. Pools are very, very dangerous for children. And the best way to child-proof or baby- proof a pull is to put a gate around it that has a lock.

And that is always closed. Next thing I'm going to talk about is the outlet covers. Outlet covers are sometimes necessary these days. It's kind of funny.

A lot of outlets nowadays are safety outlets where children can't stick anything in it. And the only way to plug

anything into it is if both of the plugs are contacted at the same time.

So babies aren't able to like stick their fingers in or stick a single thing in like a paperclip or something. However, that's not always the case. So if you have outlets in your house, it is a good idea to cover those.

If there are any wires or cords, you want to keep those just hidden and tucked away, because babies will go right for them and start pulling on them, and can get electrocuted, they can chew through cords.

When they're teething, if they have any teeth and they chew into a cord, then they get shocked from that. So, yes, outlets, outlet covers, I would suggest a sort of like a next most important thing.

Table corners, the corners covers for the Corners of Ville coffee table especially, that's right at head height, it seems like for kids. And when toddlers start climbing on the couch and jumping and stuff, they love to hit their head on their table.

So things that cover the corner will help prevent some major injuries. Now other items outside of this, sort of take it or leave it, you might not need them.

So cabinet locks, I have mixed feelings about. What I did instead of cabinet lock is I used the low down cabinets for baby related uh, feeding items and plastic items.

So like Tupperware stuff went in the bottom cabinets and shelves and, um, you know, the plastic plates and cups and spoons and silicone stuff for the babies, anything.

And then like pots and pans that were, like the metal pots in pans, not anything that was glass. Basically anything, that if the baby got it out, it would be safe.

It'd be okay. I would say put in the low down cabinets, because I should have said this earlier, but nothing is ever fully childproofed, ever. If an adult can get into it, a child can't get it given enough time.

So nothing ever fully childproof. Okay. So cabinet locks help a little bit, but they're not going to keep your child from being poisoned unintentionally.

If the poisons are in there, they are not gonna keep them from getting to something that is sharp or glass if it's in their, okay. It's just going give you a extra time to catch them before they get something out.

The best way to baby proof something is to it where they don't know it is and they've never seen it or out of sight or of reach. All right, so cabinet locks, again, mixed feelings.

Doorknob covers, where it's just harder to open the doorknobs. These are good if your kid's a runner, but you don't know necessarily until it starts happening.

So I would say, like, routinely, you do not necessarily need them.

Babyproofing the Home

But if you have a kid that tends to the door and run out of it, and usually those are older children, that's not like babies. Like babies can't reach doornops.

A typical doernop is three feet off the ground. It's pretty high up. Most toddlers can not reach door knobs. But anyways, you may or may not want those.

And then toilet seat locks. Mixed feelings about these. Sometimes you have an emergency and you need to get to the toilet, and I find that we found these more inconvenient than helpful.

Again, just the best way to baby proof the bathroom is to close the door, because in addition to toilets being dangerous, babies can also, toddlers, can get into the tub, they could turn on the hot water, get scald burns, that could drown, but they can turn the water in the sink.

And then there are typically poisonous chemicals all over the bathroom, including things like shampoo and conditioner and the bathtub and soap and then stuff that's under the thing.

So I would say keep babies out of the bath. It's one of most dangerous rooms in house. The best way to do that is to keep the door closed. You can also get a gate for in front of your bathroom and put that on outside of a door frame and just keep it gated so your baby doesn't get in there if you want to the keep door open.

All right, things you don't need in terms of baby proofing, definitely. And I don' know if you'd really call this babyproofing but those like backpack things that they have with like a pillow that goes behind the baby's head for if they fall backwards.

Those are not necessary at all and probably dangerous, maybe a strangulation risk. So I would say don''t get one of those. Your baby doesn't mean it. All right, so those are all of the major furniture related item things that you will need.

Next week, we are going to be talking about things for mom while you're pregnant and after your baby is born. Take care and have a wonderful week. So to recap, the baby furniture items you actually need are a place for your to sleep, a places to set your in each room, some stuff to take care of your everyday needs, stuff for travel, and some baby proofing items.

Thanks for listening. Remember all of the links from this episode are in the show notes and you can always go to my linktree which is l-i-n-k-t-r dot e-e slash d- r- k- e i- m.

If you know anybody who is pregnant or has a little baby tell them about this show. Maybe they would like to listen to this podcast they might find something helpful in here.

And if you know any friends who are pregnant and want to get them something for their baby shower, I would definitely recommend my book, The Baby Manual.

It's meant to be all inclusive. Really, all the questions that arise in the first year of your baby's life are in that book. So Baby manual is also linked in The Show Notes and on my link tree.

Have a wonderful day.