

DELACARE RULE GUIDANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN LFCCH 2013-2

DELACARE RULE 383 H, 385 B. These Rules cover requirements for what bed covering items may be used in sleeping equipment while children are placed there.

Intent:

Since the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended all babies should be placed on their backs to sleep in 1992, deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome have declined dramatically. But sleep-related deaths from other causes, including suffocation, entrapment and asphyxia, have increased. A majority of these deaths in child care occur in the first day or first week that an infant starts attending a child care program.

These Rules were issued to ensure that children do not incur injuries or die as a result of napping/sleeping in an unsafe environment and were the best practice at the time of issue. Rules 383 and 385 were included to ensure that providers take reasonable steps to prevent injuries and deaths.

“Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards” is the nationally recognized source for health and safety standards in the child care industry. This document is the combined product of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. This document was used as the resource in writing Delacare Rules.

This current Guidance and Technical Assistance Bulletin does not change the existing Delacare Rule. The purpose is to advise you of a significant change in recommendations from national experts in the use of blankets for infant sleeping environments.

Documentation:

Child Care Licensing Specialists verify compliance with Delacare Rules through direct observations made during site visits. The Provider is not required to provide any specific documentation for compliance.

Clarification:

Recently “Caring for Our Children” has issued an updated recommendation on [Standard 3.1.4.1: Safe Sleep Practices and SIDS/Suffocation Risk Reduction \(p. 96 in hard copy\)](#) concerning the use of blankets in the sleeping environment. *The use of blankets is no longer recommended.*

The American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations state that blankets may be hazardous and use of blankets is not advisable. This represents a change from the printed version of “Caring for Our Children 3” (June 2011) and is based on the AAP’s new policy statement on SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths (October 2011) (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/10/12/peds.2011-2284>). The new policy statement replaces the former **“Feet to Foot Rule” (referenced in Rule 385 B) which is no longer recommended by the AAP.** (The “Feet to Foot Rule” described a practice where a blanket, if used, was tucked in around the crib mattress so that the infant’s face was less likely to be covered up by the blanket. One strategy was to place the baby so the feet could touch the end of the crib and the blanket tucked around the end of the mattress so that the blanket only reached the level of the infant’s chest.) **This practice is no longer recommended by the AAP as the use of any blanket in an infant’s sleep environment is not**

recommended. Please feel free to contact National Resource Center Staff at 1-800-598-KIDS (5437) if you have any questions about this change.

Recommended Actions:

An alternative sleeping strategy to the use of blankets is to use sleep clothing with no other covering over the infant. A blanket sleeper that is worn by the infant while napping/sleeping may be worn separately or on top of other clothing as long as the blanket sleeper fits comfortably, not too big or not too small, and the infant does not get overheated.

For the protection of infants OCCL strongly encourages that all licensed Providers:

- Implement the new recommendations;
- Share the recommendations with parents and guardians.

All existing Delacare Rules for sleeping and safe sleep accommodations remain in effect. Violations of those Rules will result in a citation of non-compliance.

OCCL Compliance Monitoring:

Because the revised recommendations from “Caring for Our Children” and the American Academy of Pediatrics are not law and are not specifically required under existing *Delacare Rules for Family Child Care Homes*, Providers who do not implement the new recommendations will not be cited for violations of the recommendations.

OCCL strongly urges that Providers carefully consider the potential risk inaction on this recommendation might have to the health and safety of the children served. To implement the new recommendation would not result in any increased operational costs and could potentially save a life.