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Early Childhood Investment Corporation gives away thousands of free cribs to increase infant safety in child care facilities across state

LANSING – The Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) today announced that it will give away 2,000 cribs that meet new federal safety guidelines in a crib exchange with licensed early learning and care providers across Michigan.

The crib exchange – old, unsafe cribs for cribs that meet new standards enacted last month by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission – will take place Aug. 27 at Great Start Regional Child Care Resource Centers operated by the ECIC in 10 regions across the state. Additional cribs will be given away at a later date.

“School readiness begins at birth, and crib safety is an important factor in making sure all children arrive at the schoolhouse door healthy and ready to go,” said Judy Y. Samelson, CEO of ECIC.

ECIC is a public/private initiative building a high quality child care system for Michigan as part of its work to restructure the state’s investment in children from birth to five through state and local community efforts.

The exchanges serve a licensing requirement for licensed and registered providers serving infants. The 2,000 new cribs were purchased by ECIC for a discounted price of \$450,000 using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. Outdated cribs gathered at the exchanges will be destroyed to ensure other families or providers can’t use them.

Karen Roback, director of the Great Start Child Care Quality Program for ECIC, said cribs were targeted first to early learning and care providers who accept children who receive subsidized child care payments from the Michigan Department of Human Services, as well as Early Head Start sites/locations.

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“Those are the most vulnerable children,” Roback said. “The purpose of the funds is to improve the quality of care for the most vulnerable children. Safe cribs improve the quality of the early learning and care setting.”

“We’re hoping other funders – businesses, foundations and others - will now want to step up and join this effort to create safe havens for infants and toddlers,” she said. “Quality care is critical for childhood development.”

In addition to cribs for individual children, each child care center chosen for the crib exchange will receive a stronger “evacuation crib,” which is used to move multiple children in an emergency situation.

For times and locations of crib giveaways, call (877) 614-7328. For more information about the crib exchange program, call Mary Luchies, coordinator of the crib exchange, at (231) 679-2670. For more information on the Great Start Child Care Quality Program, go to <http://greatstartforkids.org/content/great-start-quality-child-care-program>. For more information about ECIC and its efforts, go to <http://greatstartforkids.org/>.