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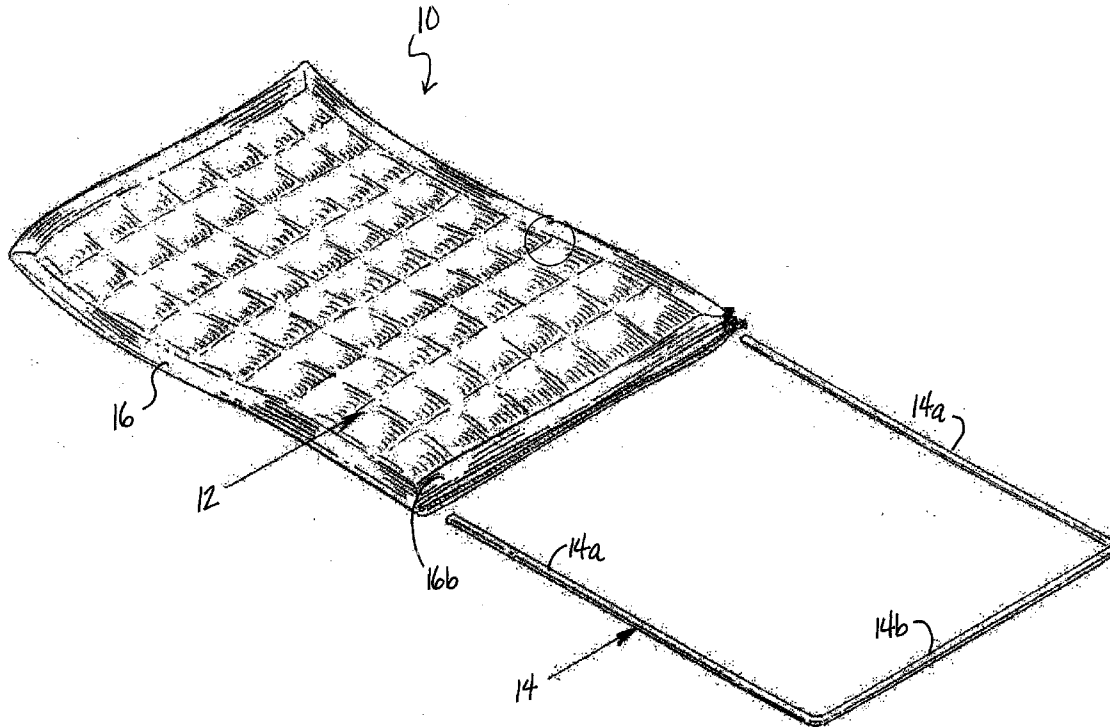
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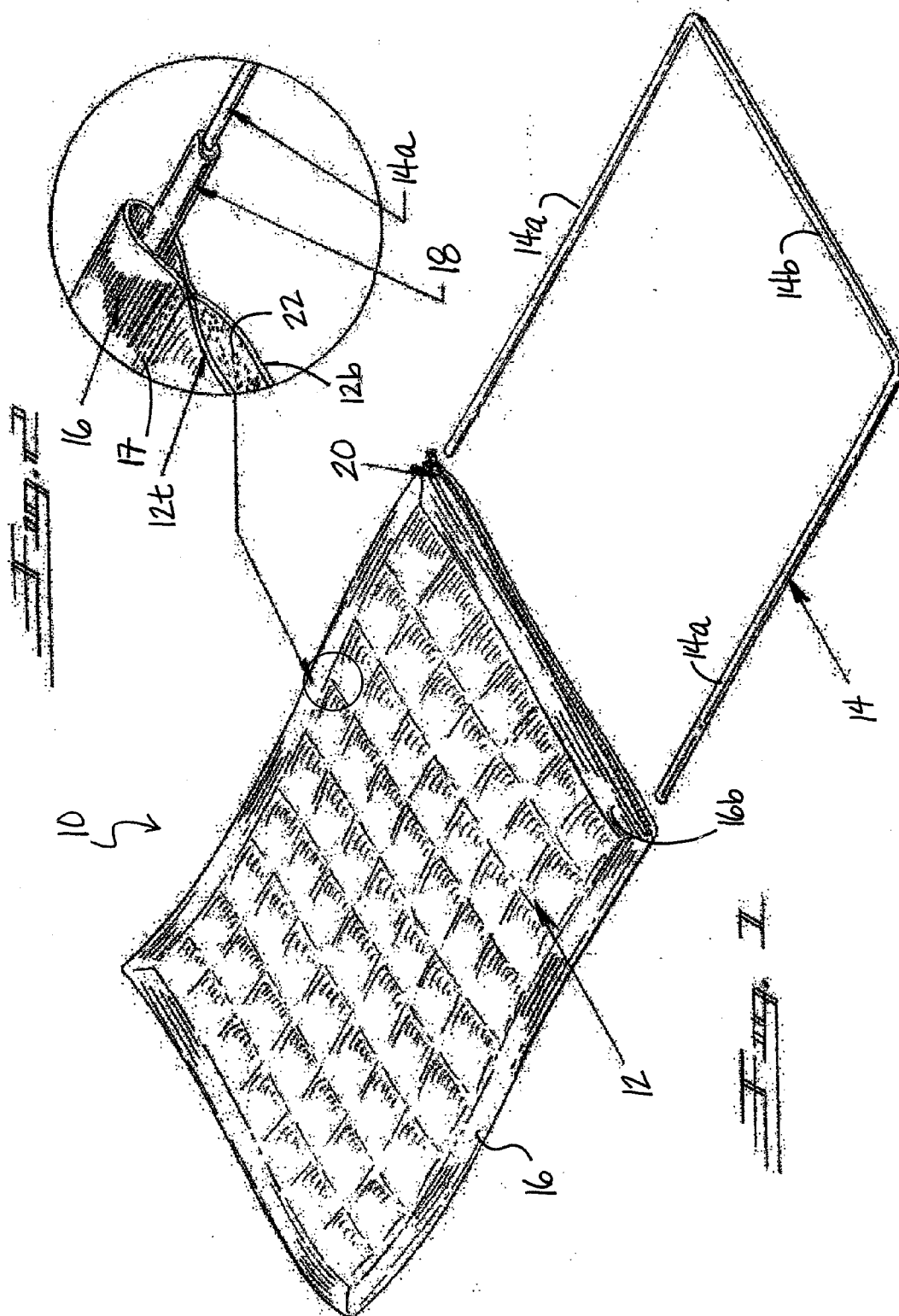
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ABSTRACT(21) Appl. No.: **11/422,493**(22) Filed: **Jun. 6, 2006****Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/687,682, filed on Jun. 6, 2005.

A safety blanket assembly includes a blanket and a frame that engages the blanket to limit the distortion or bundling of the blanket. The blanket has an outer perimeter that is surrounded by a border to receive a substantially U-shaped frame. The frame is insertable into the hollow border of the blanket to keep three of the four sides of the blanket stiff and prevent the blanket from wrapping around a child covered by the blanket.





SAFETY BLANKET ASSEMBLY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

[0001] This patent application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/687,682, filed on Jun. 6, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to blankets, and more specifically, to a safety blanket for use by an infant or child, and even more specifically, to a blanket that will not entangle and harm an infant or child.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Parents want to make sure that their infant or toddler is kept warm while reclining in a crib or bed, and therefore they frequently wrap their child in a blanket like an adult. However, one significant risk for babies while in a crib is suffocation in soft bedding, such as quilts, comforters, sheepskins, pillows, pillow-like stuffed toys, and other soft products that may keep the baby from breathing easily. With respect to blankets and quilts, the infant may easily entangle himself or herself as the baby rolls in the crib, thereby creating an opportunity for suffocation in the proximate sheet. Consequently, experts recommend that if a blanket or sheet is to be used in a crib, the parents should make sure the blanket is tucked in around the crib mattress to prevent the infant from pulling it forward above the infant's chest. Even with such instructions and warnings, it is still possible for the sheet to become un-tucked and flexible for the baby to pull around his or her head, once again endangering the child.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] A safety blanket assembly is described that helps to keep infants and children warm while protecting the child from suffocation and harm by restricting a blanket from twisting or tangling around the head of the covered child. The safety blanket assembly includes the blanket and a frame that engages the blanket to limit the distortion or bundling of the blanket by the covered infant. The blanket has an outer perimeter that is surrounded by a border to receive the frame. The frame is substantially U-shaped, and therefore insertable into the hollow border of the blanket to keep three of the four sides of the blanket stiff and prevent the blanket from wrapping around the child.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] A safety blanket embodying the features of the present invention is depicted in the accompanying drawings, which form a portion of this disclosure, wherein:

[0006] **FIG. 1** is an exploded perspective view of the safety blanket of the present invention; and

[0007] **FIG. 2** is a cross sectional view of the safety blanket illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0008] The present invention of a safety blanket assembly **10** is illustrated in **FIGS. 1 and 2**. The safety blanket

assembly **10** helps to keep infants and children warm while protecting the child from suffocation and harm by restricting a blanket **12** from twisting or tangling around the head of the covered child. In particular, the safety blanket assembly **10** includes the blanket **12** and a frame **14** that engages the blanket **12** to limit the distortion of the blanket **12** by the covered infant.

[0009] Looking to **FIG. 1**, the safety blanket **12** may be rectangular in shape with a slightly rounded bottom edge created by a seam **17** around the blanket **12** that may create a border **16**. In one embodiment, the measurements of the blanket **12** are between twenty-four to thirty-six inches in width by approximately forty-two inches in length, although any particular dimensions may be set by the producer. The dimensions of the aforementioned embodiment help to ensure that the blanket **12** is sized to provide adequate coverage for an infant or young child. The dimensions of the blanket **12** are approximate and could be adjusted as necessary during the pre-production phase to ensure that the safety blanket **12** functions as intended for a child having a particular age.

[0010] Referring to **FIG. 2**, the blanket **12** includes a base portion **12b** and a top portion **12t**, with the base and top portions **12b**, **12t** being made of a fabric such as flannel, which would be comfortable to the child since it is soft and warm. Other fabric options for the blanket could include cotton fabrics or cotton blends, silk, satin, or another fabric used with conventional blankets, and the base and top portions **12b**, **12t** may be made of independent fabrics. However, the fabric chosen for use in the production of the safety blanket **12** of the safety blanket assembly **10** should meet safety requirements for flammability. The fabric should additionally be machine washable and should resist shrinking and fading. In addition, a cushioning material **22** may be placed b/t base and top portions **12b**, **12t** to provide insulation for the blanket **12**.

[0011] As noted above and shown in **FIGS. 1 and 2**, the safety blanket **12** additionally has a border **16** that surrounds the entire outer perimeter of the blanket **12**. The border **16** may be a part of the blanket **12**, or made of satin for functionality and appearance, although other cotton fabrics could be used as well. This border **16** is designed to house the rigid frame **14** that sets this blanket assembly **10** apart from a standard baby blanket design. Thus, the border **16** itself could house a frame **14**, or the blanket **12** may simply include the two abutting sheets **12b**, **12t** that are joined by a connector **20**, such as a zipper, button, or hook and loop material, such that the frame **14** would fit between the two sheets **12b**, **12t**.

[0012] Looking to **FIG. 1**, the frame **14** includes three components, namely, a base **14b** and two arms **14a** extended therefrom in a common direction, to create a U-shape or horseshoe shape. The length of the base **14b** of the frame **14** may be approximately twenty-four to twenty-six inches in length by approximately twenty inches, although this width of the frame **14** will generally correspond with the width of the blanket **12** as set by the producer. The frame **14** may be made of a variety of materials, such as plastic or some other resin material, such that it is stiff or substantially rigid yet still flexible or bendable. For example, the frame **14** could be made of a hard yet flexible plastic known by the trademark Lexan, or some other similar material. As a variation, it

should be noted that the plastic frame **14** could be replaced with a softer material that would serve as the frame and would restrict roll-up of the blanket.

[0013] A portion or all of the frame **14** may be covered with a padded material **18**, such as foam, which would be further encased by the border **16** (see FIG. 3). For example, this padded material **18** may engage six inches of each arm **14a** from the free end, or it may engage the whole arm **14a**, whichever is desired by the user. This padded material **18** further protects the child being covered by the safety blanket **12** from engaging hard edges of the frame **14** and provides a comfortable edge for the child to engage.

[0014] A zipper **20** or other connection member may be sewn in the bottom border **16b** adjacent the bottom of the safety blanket **12**. The zipper **20** secures the frame **14** within the border **16** of the safety blanket assembly **12** after it has been inserted into the safety blanket **12**.

[0015] To insert the frame **14** into the safety blanket **12**, the user will unzip or disconnect the zippered edge along the bottom border **16b**. The user will then align the free ends of the arms **14a** of the frame **14** with the open satin border **16** of the safety blanket **12**, and the frame **14** is then slid into the openings of the border **16** along the length of the safety blanket **12** and according to the length of the arms **14a** of the frame **14**. The zipper **20** is then zipped to close the bottom edge **16b** of the safety blanket **12**, so that the safety blanket **12** has a substantially firm or rigid edge along two sides and base of the safety blanket **12** to prevent the safety blanket **12** from being bundled together. The frame **14** could then be removed as necessary when it is time to launder or store the blanket **12**.

[0016] Consequently, when the safety blanket assembly **10** is assembled, it may be placed on the chest of an infant or child to warm and protect the infant while keeping the blanket **12** in a substantially stretched position. While stretched by the frame **14**, the infant will not be able to become entangled in the blanket **12** as the infant moves about in the crib, allowing parents to be confident that the infant will not suffocate or be harmed by having such a blanket **12** in the child's crib.

[0017] While this invention has been described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it is to be understood that variations and modifications can be affected within the spirit and scope of the invention as described herein and as described in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A safety blanket assembly for protecting a child from suffocation comprising:

- a blanket having an outer perimeter;
- a hollow border surrounding the outer perimeter of said blanket; and
- a frame insertable into the hollow border to prevent said blanket from wrapping around the child.

2. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1, wherein said frame comprises:

- a base; and
- two cantilever arms extending from said base in the same direction.

3. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1, wherein said frame is substantially U-shaped.

4. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1, wherein said frame is substantially rigid.

5. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of said frame is covered with a padded material.

6. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1 wherein said blanket comprises a top layer and a bottom layer.

7. The safety blanket assembly of claim 6 further comprising a cushioning material between said top layer and said bottom layer.

8. The safety blanket assembly of claim 1 wherein said border comprises:

- a hollow bottom border portion; and
- a connector extending along said bottom border portion to open said bottom border portion.

9. The safety blanket assembly of claim 8 wherein said connector comprises a zipper.

10. A safety blanket assembly for protecting a child from suffocation comprising:

- a hollow blanket having a top layer and a bottom layer, said hollow blanket having an outer perimeter; and
- a frame insertable into the hollow blanket to prevent said blanket from wrapping around the child.

11. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10, wherein said frame comprises:

- a base; and
- two cantilever arms extending from said base in the same direction.

12. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10, wherein said frame is substantially U-shaped.

13. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10, wherein said frame is substantially rigid.

14. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10 wherein at least a portion of said frame is covered with a padded material.

15. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10 further comprising a cushioning material between said top layer and said bottom layer of said blanket.

16. The safety blanket assembly of claim 10 further comprising a seam proximate outer perimeter of said hollow blanket, said seam forming a border about said outer perimeter.

17. The safety blanket assembly of claim 16 wherein said border comprises a hollow bottom border portion and a connector sealing said bottom border portion.

18. The safety blanket assembly of claim 17 wherein said connector comprises a zipper.

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