CRIB LINER WITH SKIRT

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ABSTRACT

A crib liner is constructed to include an integral skirt and is intended for use with a crib that includes a crib mattress that is disposed on a platform. The crib liner includes a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface. The liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the crib. The crib liner further includes a skirt portion that is attached to a bottom edge of the liner portion and depends downwardly therefrom and is configured to extend below the platform on which the crib mattress is supported. At least one of the liner portion and skirt portion has on a rear surface thereof a set of second fasteners for attachment to the crib.
CRIB LINER WITH SKIRT

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to crib related products and in particular, to crib attachments that are designed to prevent or protect infants or young children when in a crib from potentially problematic situations, such as getting limbs extended and caught between crib slats, etc., and at the same time provide an aesthetically pleasing product that also incorporates a crib skirt.

BACKGROUND

[0002] As is well known, an infant bed (commonly referred to as a crib) is a small bed that is specifically designed for infants and very young children. Cribs are designed to safely restrict the infant to the crib and therefore, are designed so that the sides are too high for an infant to climb and no footholds are provided. Cribs are also designed to prevent limb entrapment and consequently, in many countries, government agencies that oversee product safety have enacted standards for cribs. For example, typical standards include requirements that concern the size and spacing of the vertical bars or slats on the sides and ends and also the distance between the top of the side and the top of the mattress support in different operating positions.

[0003] Conventional baby cribs include side rails that are made up of top and bottom horizontal bars interconnected by a series of spaced apart slats. Frequently babies and toddlers while sleeping or playing in their cribs intentionally or accidentally extend their limbs out of the crib between the slats and can have difficulty drawing them back into the crib. If this occurs when the child is sleeping, the extended limbs will remain uncovered and become cold, and the child will ultimately awaken. In addition, the child could potentially be injured or caused discomfort by having a limb become temporarily lodged between a pair of slats. Most conventional cribs also include headboards and footboards that also can be made with spaced-apart supports (similar to side rails) and as a result, the infant can extend a limb between these supports as well.

[0004] While once popular, one style of crib that was commonly known as a “drop-side” crib has been recently banned in the United States due to safety concerns resulting from the drop-down side portion thereof. As a result, the prevalent crib design of the day is a fixed crib structure that most often includes two side rail sections and a footboard/headboard or some other structure that closes off one end of the crib. For example, some cribs include an integral changing station which is fixedly attached to one end of the crib and provides a vertical wall that closes off that end of the crib’s sleeping area.

[0005] In addition to a mattress, there are a vast number of different crib accessory products that are sold for use with a crib. These accessory products can range from toys, such as mobiles, to comfort products, such as quilts and bedding and to safety products that are designed to address potential safety concerns and/or provide additional protection for the infant in the crib. For example, one type of product that is popular is a crib shield/crib bumper that is disposed across at least a portion of the crib. “Crib bumpers” are marketed to keep children from bumping against the hard sides and hurting themselves and keeping arms and legs inside of the crib. Crib bumpers can be formed in different styles and using different materials. For example, traditional crib bumpers can be formed from a number of different materials, including natural materials (e.g., cotton or bamboo) or synthetic materials (e.g., polyester) that provide a padded product that protects the infant from the hard sides. Crib bumpers can be marketed as part of a matching bedding set and therefore, often include decorative patterns or decorative indicia, such as animals, etc. Many parents like the decorative look of the traditional crib bumpers.

[0006] In addition and more recently, crib shields/crib bumpers can be formed of a mesh material that is intended to provide increased ventilation. These products can be in the form of a breathable integrated padded mesh material. However, these mesh products lack the decorative appearance of more traditional crib bumpers. Most times, the mesh product is in the form a plain mesh panel that lacks any ornamental detail or only includes minor ornamental detail.

SUMMARY

[0007] In one embodiment, a crib liner is constructed to include an integral skirt and is intended for use with a crib that includes a crib mattress that is disposed on a platform. The crib liner includes a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface. The liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the crib. The crib liner further includes a skirt portion that is attached to a bottom edge of the liner portion and depends downwardly therefrom and is configured to extend below the platform on which the crib mattress is supported. At least one of the liner portion and skirt portion has on a rear surface thereof at least one set of fasteners for attachment to the crib.

[0008] Each of the set of first fasteners comprises a looped structure that has an adjustable circumference so as to allow adjustment of the first fastener relative to one or more frame supports of the crib to cause the first fastener to assume a taut condition. The one or more frame supports can comprise one of: (1) one or more slats of a side rail; and (2) a corner post.

[0009] The set of first fasteners can comprise two different types of fasteners with a first set being formed at or proximate ends of the liner portion and a second set being formed between the first set.

[0010] In addition, the set of second fasteners can comprise a plurality of tacks for attachment to the platform that supports the crib mattress.

[0011] A crib liner and skirt combination for a crib that includes a crib mattress that is disposed on a platform includes a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface. The liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the crib and a set of second fasteners for attachment to the platform. The combination also includes a skirt that is separate from the liner portion and is configured for placement across the platform on which the crib mattress is supported. The skirt has a base portion and a plurality of side portions that depend downwardly from the base portion. The base portion for placement over the platform and includes a plurality of spaced openings formed along a periphery of the base portion. The spaced openings provide access to the platform to allow the second fasteners to be attached to the platform.

[0012] These and other aspects, features and advantages shall be apparent from the accompanying Drawings and description of certain embodiments of the invention.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a side perspective view of a conventional crib;

[0014] FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of an integral crib liner and skirt in accordance with one embodiment;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a rear elevation view of the integral crib liner and skirt;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a side elevation view of the integral crib liner and skirt installed on a crib side rail;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a top elevation view of the integral crib liner and skirt attached to the crib;

[0018] FIG. 6 is a side elevation view of the integral crib liner and skirt partially installed on a crib side rail;

[0019] FIG. 7 is a side perspective view of a crib with a crib skirt according to one embodiment of the present invention;

[0020] FIG. 8 is a front perspective view of a crib liner for use with the crib skirt of FIG. 7;

[0021] FIG. 9 is a top perspective view of the crib liner and skirt attached to the crib; and

[0022] FIG. 10 is a front elevation view of the crib liner and skirt attached to the crib.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0023] FIG. 1 shows a conventional crib 100 that includes two side rails 110, 120, a footboard 130 and a headboard (not shown). The side rails 110, 120 extend between the footboard 130 and the headboard and along a length thereof. The headboard, footboard 130 and side rails 110, 120 are connected and sized for receiving a mattress 160 within an interior 170 of the crib 100. It will be understood that the crib 100 can be of a permanent type or can be of a foldable or portable type.

[0024] Generally, the side rails 110, 120, footboard 130, and headboard define an interior boundary extending proximate and around a periphery of the mattress 160 disposed within the crib 100. The mattress 160 is supported within the crib 100 by various platform structures, such as a spring frame 161 or other structure. For example, a bottom structural member may be supported at one or more positions about the interior boundary of the crib 100. In many conventional cribs 100, the mattress 160 and/or a supporting platform 161 may be raised and/or lowered. The crib 100 includes four corners 105.

[0025] The supporting mattress platform 161 is typically comprised of a plurality of springs attached to a rectangular frame, with said mattress platform attached to the perimeter structure of the crib, typically at the four corner posts 105. The mattress platform 161 provides a surface on which the mattress 160 sits.

[0026] Each of the side rails 110, 120 generally includes a top bar 112 and a bottom bar 114 positioned substantially parallel to one another. A plurality of generally vertically-spaced side support elements 162 extend between the horizontal top bar 112 and horizontal bottom bar 114. The side rails 110, 120 are fixedly attached to the other components of the crib, such as the footboard 130 and headboard.

[0027] The footboard 130 of crib 100 includes an upper bar 132 as well as a bottom horizontal element 134, each connected in a fixed position to a pair of the corner posts 105. In a similar manner to the side rails 110, 120, generally vertically-spaced support elements can extend between the top bar 132 and the bottom horizontal element 134 or, as shown, the footboard 130 can be solid. In the illustrated embodiment, the headboard can have a similar or identical construction as the footboard 130.

[0028] As shown in FIG. 1, the plurality of spaced-apart side support elements 116 of the side rails 110, 120 and the headboard and footboard define the interior boundary extending proximate and around the periphery of the mattress 160 disposed within the crib 100.

[0029] In accordance with the present invention and as shown in FIGS. 2-5, a crib liner (crib shield) with integral skirt 200 is provided for use with crib 100 and more particularly, the crib liner with integral skirt 200 is attached to the crib 100 along at least some portions of the interior boundary of the crib 100 defined by the side rails 110, 120, headboard and footboard 130. For ease of simplicity, the crib liner with integral skirt is simply referred to herein as the crib liner 200 and described below, it will be appreciated that the crib liner 200 has two distinct portions or sections, namely, the crib liner portion which serves one purpose and the skirt portion which serves a second purpose.

[0030] In the illustrated embodiment, the crib liner 200 can come as a set of liners or panel sections for attachment to the crib 100. For example, the crib liner set can include two or more crib liners 200 that are used for covering portions of the crib 100. For example, one crib liner 200 can be attached to the crib 100 such that it extends along at least a length of the side rail 110 and optionally along one or both of the headboard and the footboard 130 and another crib liner 200 can be attached to the crib 100 such that it extends along the other side rail 120 and optionally along one or both of the headboard and the footboard 130. Alternatively, the crib liners 200 can be sold individually.

[0031] In one embodiment, the crib liner with integral skirt 200 is provided in two different sizes, namely, a first size which is intended for placement along one of the side rails 110 and a second size which is intended for placement along one of the headboard or footboard. The length of the side rail is typically longer than the length of the headboard or footboard. There are many different types of crib designs and some cribs have a solid wall section, such as a solid side rail or solid headboard or solid footboard, and therefore, there is no need to have a liner placed in such portion of the crib. As a result, the crib liner 200 of the present invention can be sold as individual panels or as a set of panels to allow the consumer to purchase only those liners that are needed for the consumer's crib (based on its design, etc.). For example, if the rear side wall of the crib is solid, the consumer needs only to purchase one side rail sized liner for the front side wall and two smaller sized liners for the headboard and the footboard.

[0032] As will be appreciated and understood, the construction of the liners 200 for use along the side rails and headboard or footboard is the same with only the dimensions of the liners 200 differing depending upon where the liner 200 is to be placed along the crib.

[0033] The crib liner with integral skirt 200 can be thought of as having two distinct sections or portions, namely, a liner portion 210 that is intended for placement along and above the mattress 160 and a skirt portion 300 that is intended for placement below the mattress 160. The liner portion 210 is thus defined by a height 211 and a length 213 and has a top edge 212, an opposing bottom edge 214, a first end 216, and an opposing second end 218.

[0034] In the exemplary embodiment, the liner portion 210 is formed of a number of sections and more specifically, the
liner portion 210 is formed of at least three distinct (longitudinal) sections. The liner portion 210 has a top (first) section 220 that runs the length of the liner portion 210 and defines the top edge 212; a middle section 230 that runs the length of the liner portion 210; and a bottom (lower) section 240 that runs the length of the liner portion 210 and defines the bottom edge 214.

[0035] The top section 220 is constructed to act as the portion that is attached to the crib and in particular and in accordance with an embodiment, the top section 220 includes a number of fasteners that are used to attach the liner portion 210 to the crib at one or more locations.

[0036] The top section 220 can be formed of any number of different materials including but not limited to natural materials and synthetic materials. The top section 220 can also carry decorative indicia, such as printed indicia or the like.

[0037] In the illustrated embodiment, the top section 220 includes a first type of fastener (first fastener) 300 and a second type of fastener (second fastener) 310. The first type of fastener 300 acts as the primary fastener for releasably attaching the liner portion 210 to the crib, while the second type of fastener 310 acts as a secondary fastener for further releasably attaching the liner portion 210 to the crib.

[0038] In the illustrated embodiment, there is a plurality of fasteners 300 of the first type and similarly, there is a plurality of fasteners 310 of the second type. More specifically, there are two fasteners 300 at or near each end of the liner portion 210 and there are two or more fasteners 330 disposed between the two fasteners 300.

[0039] Preferably as described below, the fasteners 300 and 310 are adjustable in that the fasteners can be tightened in such a way that reduces slack in the liner portion 210. In other words, the fastening and tightening of the fasteners 300 causes sections of the liner portion 210 to be drawn in towards the two main points of attachment (defined by fasteners 300) between the liner portion 210 and the crib frame to provide a tighter, more snug fit.

[0040] The fasteners 300 are constructed to attach the liner portion 210 (e.g., the ends thereof) to the crib. The fasteners 300 can be any number of different types of fasteners. For example, various types of fastening apparatus may include hook and loop closures (e.g., Velcro), snaps, buttons/buttonholes, ties, straps, buckles, zippers, magnets, etc. In the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 1-4, the fasteners 300 are in the form of hook and loop closures. More specifically, each fastener 300 is formed of a first fastening element 302 and a second fastening element 304 that mates with the first fastening element 302. The first fastening element 302 is in the form of a first strip of elongated material that is attached at one end to the inner surface of the top section 210. The opposite end of the first fastening element 302 is a free end 303 that includes a buckle 305 that has a slot (opening) formed therein. The second fastening element 304 is in the form of a second strip of elongated material that is attached at one end 307 to the inner surface of the top section 220. An opposite end 309 of the second fastening element 304 is a free end. The strip 304 is constructed such that it has hook and loop material one surface thereof and in particular, a first patch of hook and loop material 311 is disposed along the front surface near or at the end 307 and a second patch of hook and loop material 313 is disposed along the rear surface near or at the free end 309.

[0041] The first and second fastening elements 302, 304 mate with one another by passing the free end 309 through the slot formed in the buckle 305 and then folding back the second fastening element 304 on to itself, thereby causing a mating of the hook and loop material that is on the front and rear surfaces of the second fastening element 304.

[0042] Since the second fastening element 304 passes through buckle 305, tension can be created within the liner 210 by pulling the second fastening element 304 until it is taught and then mating together the hook and loop material 311, 313 formed on the rear surface of the second fastening element 304.

[0043] It will be appreciated that any number of different types of fasteners (including those described herein) can be used to securely attach the liner portion 210 to the frame of the crib.

[0044] To attach the liner portion 210 to the crib, the first fastening element 302 is disposed on one side of at least one slat 116 and the second fastening element 304 is disposed on the other side of the at least one slat 116. As a result, the one or more slats 116 are captured between the first and second fastening elements 302, 304 when they are mated together as described above.

[0045] The fasteners 310 are thus constructed to further attach the liner portion 210 to the crib at additional points. The fasteners 310 can be any number of different types of fasteners. For example, various types of fastening apparatus can include hook and loop closures (e.g., Velcro), snaps, buttons/buttonholes, ties, straps, buckles, zippers, magnets, etc. In the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 1-4, the fasteners 310 are in the form of hook and loop closures. More specifically, each fastener 310 is formed of a first fastening element 312 and a second fastening element 316 that mates with the first fastening element 312. The first fastening element 312 is in the form of a patch of hook and loop material that is fixedly attached to the front surface of the top portion 220 at or near the top edge thereof. The second fastening element 316 is in the form of an elongated strip that is attached at one end to the top portion 220 and has a free end. The free end has a patch of hook and loop material and in particular, the hook and loop material is formed on the rear surface of the strip 316.

[0046] FIG. 6 shows an alternative construction in which both the first and second fastening elements 312, 316 are in the form of elongated strips of material (straps) with a fastener associated therewith. The two straps 312, 316 attach to one another to thereby capture the crib frame (slat 116).

[0047] The use of the fastener 310 is as follows. As described herein, when the liner portion 210 is placed along an inner surface of the crib, such as along the inside of one side rail, the strip 316 is fed through one opening defined between the slats of the side rail and is extended laterally across one or more of the slats and the free end is mated to the first fastening element 312. In this manner, the strip 316 effectively captures one or more slats 116 of the side rail and provides another point of attachment between the liner portion 210 and the crib.

[0048] Although hook and loop fasteners are preferable in some products, any other closure or fastener apparatus suitable for attaching crib liners or other crib accessories to the crib 100 can be used and implemented with the integral liner and skirt described herein.

[0049] The middle section 230 is formed of a material that has enhanced breathability and in particular, the middle section 230 is formed of a mesh material. The mesh material used to construct at least a portion of the middle section 230 can include any suitable mesh-type material that provides breathable functionality. Breathable functionality refers to the abil-
ity of the material to allow air to substantially move effectively therethrough. As used herein, when air is indicated as substantially moving effectively through a material, it is meant that the material includes openings (e.g., mesh openings, open-framework, spaces between elements thereof, or even those that may not be visually perceivable openings but still allow a breathable function to occur) that do not impede air movement to an extent that would prevent a human being from breathing through (e.g., when a human’s respiratory openings (e.g., nose/mouth) are in direct contact with a material) such a material in order to prevent suffocation and further that such openings are too small to permit an infant to insert a finger or toe therethrough. For example, such materials may include cotton, silk, polyester, nylon, etc.

[0051] In one embodiment, the middle section 230 is formed of a mesh material that is formed of openings too small to permit an infant to insert a finger or toe therethrough. It will also be appreciated that when mesh material is discussed herein with reference to other crib liners, one exemplary type of mesh is thus one in which the mesh material that is formed of openings too small to permit an infant to insert a finger or toe therethrough.

[0052] In accordance with one embodiment, the surface area of the middle section 230 is less than 66% of the total surface area of the liner portion 210 and more particularly, the surface area of the middle liner portion 230 can be less than 55%; less than 50%; less than 40%, etc.

[0053] It will be appreciated that decorative indicia can also be formed on the middle section 230 even when it is formed of a mesh material.

[0054] In the illustrated embodiment, the top section 220 that carries the fasteners is formed of a non-mesh material since it is spaced much higher than the crib mattress surface.

[0055] The bottom section 240 is more similar to the top section 220 in that it is preferably not formed of a mesh material since the bottom section 240 is intended for placement below the crib mattress surface.

[0056] As shown in FIG. 2, the liner portion 210 also includes two end fasteners 270, 272 that are formed at the ends of the sections 220, 230, 240 and run vertically from the top edge to the bottom edge of the liner portion 210. One end fastener 270 is formed on the front surface of the liner portion 210 at or near end 216, while the other end fastener 272 is formed along the rear surface of the liner portion 210 at or near end 218 (FIG. 3). The two end fasteners 270, 272 are designed to attach one crib liner/skirt 100 to another crib liner/skirt 100 in the case in which multiple crib liners/skirts 100 are used with the crib. Thus, the fasteners 270, 272 of one crib liner/skirt 100 are configured to attach the one crib liner/skirt 100 to one or more other crib liners/skirts 100 by mating with corresponding fasteners 270, 272 of the other crib liner/skirt 100.

[0057] The fasteners 270, 272 thus permit multiple liners/skirts 100 to be easily attached to and detached from one another to allow user customization.

[0058] It will be understood that each fastener 270, 272 can be formed of more than one fastener (i.e., a series of snaps) that attaches to complementary fasteners associated with the other crib liner/skirt. In addition, the fastener 270, 272 does not have to extend completely from the top edge to the bottom edge but can occupy a portion of the liner theretebetween. Further, hook and loop material is only one exemplary type of fastener that can be used.

[0059] The skirt portion 300 is integrally connected to the liner portion 210 and more specifically, the skirt portion 300 is attached to the liner portion 210 along the bottom edge 214 thereof. The skirt portion 300 can be attached to the liner portion 210 using any number of conventional techniques including but not limited to stitching, use of an adhesive, hook and loop fastener, etc. There can be some overlap between the bottom edge 214 of the liner portion 210 and the skirt portion 300.

[0060] The skirt portion 300 has a front surface 310, an opposing rear surface 312, a top edge 314 and an opposing rear edge 316. The skirt portion 300 can be pleated as shown. Indicia, such as printed decorative indicia, can be provided on one or more of the front surface 310 and the rear surface 312.

[0061] The skirt portion 300 has a height H2 and a length L2. The height H2 of the skirt portion 300 can be greater than, less than or about equal to the height H1 of the liner portion 210. The length L2 of the skirt portion 300 in its normal rest position (e.g., in a pleated condition) is preferably about equal to the length L1 of the liner portion 210 such that the respective first ends of the liner portion 210 and skirt portion 300 are in general alignment and the respective second ends of the liner portion 210 and skirt portion 300 are also in general alignment.

[0062] It will be understood that the material that forms the skirt portion 300 can be the same or different than the material that is used to form at least a portion of the liner portion 210 (e.g., portions 220, 230). The skirt portion 300 can thus be formed of a natural material, such as cotton, or a synthetic material. Since the skirt portion 300 is positioned below the mattress 160, the skirt portion 300 preferably does not include a mesh material due to its being spaced away from the child.

[0063] An additional fastener for attaching the crib liner/skirt 100 to the crib is provided. More specifically, a fastener 400 can be provided along a length of the liner/skirt 100 for attaching the liner/skirt 100 to the mattress platform 161 as shown in FIG. 4. As shown, the fastener 400 is preferably in the form of a plurality of fasteners 400 that are disposed along the length of the liner/skirt 100 at or near the location at which the liner portion 210 joins the skirt portion 300.

[0064] The fasteners 400 can be formed of any one of the types of fasteners disclosed herein and in the illustrated embodiment, the fasteners 400 are in the form of a plurality of ties 400 that are spaced along the length of the liner/skirt 100. As shown in FIG. 5, the ties 400 are securely attached to the mattress platform 161 along the rear of the liner/skirt 100. The fasteners 400 thus provide additional fasteners that attach the liner/skirt 100 to a different portion of the crib (i.e., the spring frame 161 as opposed to the slats of a side rail) and further are formed along the rear surface as opposed to the fasteners 300, 310 that are formed along the front surface. In this manner, the
crib liner/skirt 100 is attached to the crib both along its rear and front, thereby providing a secure attachment as shown in FIGS. 5 and 6.

[0065] As previously mentioned, in-use the crib liner/skirt 100 is disposed along the side (interior) of one side or end of the crib. The crib liner/skirt 100 is positioned at the proper vertical height such that the second portion 230 which is formed of mesh is located at and above the crib mattress, with the bottom portion 240 and the skirt portion 300 extending below such crib mattress surface. The bottom portion 240 and/or the skirt portion 300 thus cover the unsightly mattress platform 161 and provide a decorative appearance. The product of the present invention thus eliminates the need for the user to have a separate crib liner and skirt. Instead, a customizable product is provided that is constructed to be securely attached to the crib and also position a liner section of increased breathability along the crib mattress surface.

[0066] FIG. 7 shows the crib 100 with the main difference between the crib shown in FIG. 1 is that a skirt 600 in accordance with the present invention is disposed across and on top of the mattress platform 161 and the mattress 160 is disposed over the skirt 600. The placement of the mattress 160 over the skirt 600 maintains the skirt 600 in place.

[0067] The skirt 600 is formed of a base portion 610 that extends over and is disposed on a support surface, such as the mattress platform 161. The base portion 610 has a rectangular shape complementary to traditional crib design. The skirt 600 further includes a plurality of side portions 620 that depend from the base portion 610. In the illustrated embodiment, there are four side portions 620 which can be thought of as being formed of a pair of first side portions 622 and a pair of second side portions 624. The first side portions 622 can be disposed along the sides of the crib 100, while the second side portions 624 can be disposed along the ends of the crib 100.

[0068] In accordance with the present invention, the base portion 610 has a plurality of openings 625 formed therein along a periphery of the base portion 610 (i.e., at the interface between the base portion 610 and the first side portions 622 and also optionally at the interface between the base portion 610 and the second side portions 624). The first side portions 622 thus represent the longer sides of the skirt 600 that overlie the longer sides of the mattress 160.

[0069] The openings 625 are formed at locations that overlie the peripheral frame members of the mattress platform 161. Typically, the peripheral frame members of the mattress platform 161 are elongated metal structures, often of tubular shape. The illustrated openings 625 have triangular shapes with the pointed ends of the triangles facing inward and the maximum width of the opening 625 overlying a respective mattress platform peripheral frame member (tubular structure). As described herein, the openings 625 provide and define direct access points to the peripheral frame members of the mattress platform 161. The openings 625 are not limited to having triangular shapes and can have any number of other shapes so long as they provide access to attachment points along the mattress platform 161 (other shapes can be oblong, square, etc.).

[0070] The skirt 600 is installed on the crib 100 by disposing the base portion 610 across the top of the mattress platform 161 with the side portions 620 extending downwardly below the mattress platform 161. The side portions 620 cover up the mattress platform 161 and can extend down to the floor or close thereto.

[0071] FIGS. 8-10 illustrates a crib liner 500 that is similar to the crib liner 200 with the exception that the crib liner 500 does not include an integral skirt and is meant for use with skirt 600. Those elements of the crib liner 500 that are the same and present in the crib liner 200 are numbered alike in FIGS. 8-10. In this embodiment, the skirt 600 is thus provided as a separate element that is used in combination with the liner 500.

[0072] In the illustrated embodiment, the crib liner 500 is formed of at least three distinct (longitudinal) sections. The crib liner 500 has top (first) section 220 that runs the length of the crib liner 500 and defines the top edge 212; middle section 230 that runs the length of the crib liner 500; and bottom (lower) section 240 that runs the length of the crib liner 500 and defines the bottom edge 214.

[0073] The top section 220 is constructed to act as the portion that is attached to the crib and in particular and in accordance with one embodiment, the top section 220 includes a number of fasteners that are used to attach the crib liner 500 to the crib at one or more locations.

[0074] The top section 220 can be formed of any number of different materials including but not limited to natural materials and synthetic materials. The top section 220 can also carry decorative indicia, such as printed indicia or the like.

[0075] In the illustrated embodiment, the top section 220 includes a first type of fastener (first fastener) 300 and a second type of fastener (second fastener) 310. The first type of fastener 300 acts as the primary fastener for releasably attaching the liner portion 210 to the crib, while the second type of fastener 310 acts as a secondary fastener for further releasably attaching the crib liner 500 to the crib.

[0076] In the illustrated embodiment, there is a plurality of fasteners 300 of the first type and similarly, there is a plurality of fasteners 310 of the second type. More specifically, there are two fasteners 300 one at or near each end of the liner portion 210 and there are two or more fasteners 310 disposed between the two fasteners 300.

[0077] Preferably and as described below, the fasteners 300 are adjustable in that the fasteners can be tightened in such a way that reduces slack in the crib liner 500. In other words, the fastening and tightening of the fasteners 300 causes sections of the liner portion 210 to be drawn in towards the two main points of attachment (defined by fasteners 300) between the crib liner 500 and the crib frame to provide a more tighter, snug fit.

[0078] The fasteners 300 are constructed to attach the crib liner 500 (e.g., the ends thereof) to the crib. The fasteners 300 can be any number of different types of fasteners. For example, various types of fastening apparatus may include hook and loop closures (e.g., Velcro), snaps, buttons/button-holes, ties, straps, buckles, zippers, magnets, etc. In the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 1-4, the fasteners 300 are in the form of hook and loop closures. More specifically, each fastener 300 is formed of a first fastening element 302 and a second fastening element 304 that mates with the first fastening element 302. The first fastening element 302 is in the form of a first strip of elongated material that is attached at one end to the inner surface of the top section 210. The opposite end of the first fastening element 302 is a free end 303 that includes a buckle 305 that has a slot (opening) formed therein. The second fastening element 304 is in the form of a second strip of elongated material that is attached at one end 307 to the inner surface of the top section 220. An opposite end 309 of the second fastening element 304 is a free end. The strip 304
is constructed such that it has hook and loop material one surface thereof and in particular, a first patch of hook and loop material 311 is disposed along the front surface near or at the end 307 and a second patch of hook and loop material 313 is disposed along the rear surface near or at the free end 309.

[0079] The first and second fastening elements 302, 304 mate with one another by passing the free end 309 through the slot formed in the buckle 305 and then folding back the second fastening element 304 on to itself, thereby causing a mating of the hook and loop material that is on the front and rear surfaces of the second fastening element 304.

[0080] Since the second fastening element 304 passes through buckle 305, tension can be created within the crib liner 500 by pulling the second fastening element 304 until it is fastened and then mating together the hook and loop material 311, 313 formed on the rear surface of the second fastening element 304.

[0081] It will be appreciated that any number of different types of fasteners (including those described herein) can be used to securely attach the crib liner 500 to the frame of the crib.

[0082] To attach the crib liner 500 to the crib, the first fastening element 302 is disposed on one side of at least one of the slats 116 and the second fastening element 304 is disposed on the other side of the at least one slat 116. As a result, the one or more slats 116 are captured between the first and second fastening elements 302, 304 when they are mated together as described above.

[0083] The fasteners 310 are thus constructed to further attach the crib liner 500 to the crib at additional points. The fasteners 310 can be any number of different types of fasteners. For example, various types of fastening apparatus can include hook and loop closures (e.g., Velcro), snaps, buttons/ buttonholes, ties, straps, buckles, zippers, magnets, etc. In the illustrated embodiment, the fasteners 310 are in the form of hook and loop closures. More specifically, each fastener 310 is formed of a first fastening element 312 and a second fastening element 316 that mates with the first fastening element 312. The first fastening element 312 is in the form of a patch of hook and loop material that is fixedly attached to the front surface of the top portion 220 at or near the top edge thereof. The second fastening element 316 is in the form of an elongated strip that is attached at one end to the top portion 220 and has a free end. The free end has a patch of hook and loop material and in particular, the hook and loop material is formed on the rear surface of the strip 316.

[0084] The middle section 230 is formed of a material that has enhanced breathability and in particular, the middle section 230 is formed of a mesh material as described herein. In one embodiment, the middle section 230 is formed of a mesh material that is formed of openings too small to permit an infant to insert a finger or toe therethrough. It will also be appreciated that when mesh material is discussed herein with reference to other crib liners, one exemplary type of mesh is thus one in which the mesh material that is formed of openings too small to permit an infant to insert a finger or toe therethrough.

[0085] In accordance with one embodiment, the surface area of the middle section 230 is less than 68% of the total surface area of the crib liner 500 and more particularly, the surface area of the middle liner portion 230 can be less than 55%, less than 50%, less than 40%, etc. In FIG. 10, the relative size of the middle portion 230 has been exaggerated for purposes of illustration, while FIG. 6 is more representative of the one exemplary embodiment described herein.

[0086] It will be appreciated that decorative indicia can also be formed on the middle section 230 even when it is formed of a mesh material.

[0087] In the illustrated embodiment, the top section 220 that carries the fasteners is formed of a non-mesh material since it is spaced much higher than the crib mattress surface.

[0088] The bottom section 240 is more similar to the top section 220 in that it is preferably not formed of a mesh material since the bottom section 240 is intended for placement below the crib mattress surface.

[0089] The crib liner 500 also includes two end fasteners 270, 272 that are formed at the ends of the sections 220, 230, 240 and run vertically from the top edge to the bottom edge of the crib liner 500. One end fastener 270 is formed on the front surface of the crib liner 500 at or near end 216, while the other end fastener 272 is formed along the rear surface of the crib liner 500 at or near end 218. The two end fasteners 270, 272 are designed to attach one crib liner 500 to another crib liner 500 in the case in which multiple crib liners 500 are used with the crib. Thus, the fasteners 270, 272 of one crib liner 500 are configured to attach the one crib liner/skirt 100 to one or more other crib liners 500 by mating with corresponding fasteners 270, 272 of the other crib liner 500. In the illustrated embodiment, the fasteners 270, 272 are in the form of hook and loop material.

[0090] As shown in FIG. 9, the fastener 400 is provided along a length of the liner 500 for attaching the liner 500 to the mattress platform 161 as shown in FIG. 9. As shown, the fastener 400 is preferably in the form of a plurality of fasteners 400 that are disposed along the length of the liner 500 at or near the bottom edge 214 of the liner 500. The fasteners 400 (ties) are inserted through openings 625 formed in the skirt 600 and then attached to the mattress platform 161, thereby securely attaching a bottom edge of the liner 500 to the mattress platform. As in the first embodiment (FIG. 1-6), the ties 400 are disposed along the rear surface of the liner 500, while the other fasteners are located along the front surface of the liner 500.

[0091] It will be understood that all dimensions, such as lengths, mentioned herein and set forth in any drawings attached hereto are merely exemplary in nature and are not limiting of the present invention since the dimensions of the liner of the present invention will vary depending upon different parameters, such as the size of the crib, etc.

[0092] While the invention has been described in connection with certain embodiments thereof, the invention is capable of being practiced in other forms and using other materials and structures. Accordingly, the invention is defined by the recitations in the claims appended hereto and equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A crib liner having an integral skirt for a crib that includes a crib mattress that is disposed on a platform comprising:
   a. a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface, wherein the liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the crib; and
   a skirt portion that is attached to the liner portion and depends downwardly therefrom and is configured to extend below the platform on which the crib mattress is supported;
wherein at least one of the liner portion and skirt portion has on a rear surface thereof a set of second fasteners for attachment to the crib.

2. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein the liner portion includes a first section and an adjacent second section, the set of first fasteners being entirely disposed within the first section and the second section for placement adjacent and above a top surface of the crib mattress.

3. The crib liner of claim 2, wherein the second section is formed of a mesh material and the adjacent first section comprises a non-mesh section.

4. The crib liner of claim 3, wherein the mesh section occupies less than 50% by surface area of the liner portion.

5. The crib liner of claim 2, further including a third section, with the second section being disposed between the first and third sections, wherein the first and third sections are formed of a non-mesh material and the second section is formed of a mesh material.

6. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein each of the set of first fasteners comprises a looped structure that has an adjustable circumference so as to allow adjustment of the first fastener relative to one or more frame supports of the crib to cause the first fastener to assume a flat condition.

7. The crib liner of claim 6, wherein the one or more frame supports comprises one of: (1) one or more slats of a side rail; and (2) a corner post.

8. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein each first fastener comprises: (1) a first elongated member that is attached at one end to the front surface of the linear portion and has a buckle at an opposite second end; and (2) a second elongated member that is attached at one end to the front surface of the liner portion and has a free end that passes through a slot in the buckle, the second elongated member having two separate fastener elements that mate together to attach the second elongated member to itself after passing through the buckle and being folded on top of itself.

9. The crib liner of claim 8, wherein the two separate fastener elements comprise hook and loop patches.

10. The crib liner of claim 8, wherein the first and second elongated members comprise fabric strips.

11. The crib liner of claim 8, wherein there are two first fasteners one at or proximate each end of the liner portion.

12. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein the set of first fasteners comprises two different types of fasteners with a first set being formed at or proximate ends of the liner portion and a second set being formed between the first set.

13. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein the set of second fasteners comprises a plurality of ties for attachment to the platform that supports the crib mattress.

14. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein the mattress platform comprises a spring frame and the set of second fasteners are attached to the spring frame.

15. The crib liner of claim 1, wherein the liner portion has a first end fastener disposed on the front surface at a first end of the linear portion and second end fastener disposed on the rear surface at a second end of the liner portion, each of the first and second end fasteners being configured for attaching the liner portion to another liner portion.

16. The crib liner of claim 15, wherein the first and second end fasteners comprise hook and loop material configured to mate together and link the one liner portion to the other liner portion in series.

17. A crib liner having an integral skirt for a crib that includes a frame and a crib mattress that is disposed on a horizontal platform that is coupled to and supported by the crib frame, the crib liner comprising:

- a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface, wherein the liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the frame of the crib;
- a skirt portion that is attached to the liner portion and depends downwardly therefrom and is configured to extend below the platform on which the crib mattress is supported, the skirt portion having a front surface and a rear surface; and
- a second set of fasteners disposed on the rear surface of at least one of the liner portion and skirt portion for attaching the rear surface to the horizontal mattress platform of the crib.

18. A crib liner and skirt combination for a crib that includes a crib mattress that is disposed on a platform comprising:

- a liner portion that has a front surface and a rear surface, wherein the liner portion includes a set of first fasteners formed along the front surface for attaching the liner portion to the crib and a set of second fasteners for attachment to the crib frame; and
- a skirt that is separate from the liner portion and is configured for placement across the platform on which the crib mattress is supported, the skirt having a base portion and a plurality of side portions that depend downwardly from the base portion, the base portion for placement over the platform and includes a plurality of spaced openings formed along a periphery of the base portion, the spaced openings providing access to the platform to allow the second fasteners to be attached to the platform.

19. The combination of claim 18, wherein the spaced openings are located along at least first and second sides of the skirt and extend inwardly from the periphery of the base portion which is located at an interface between the base portion and one respective side portion.

20. The combination of claim 19, wherein the opening is triangular shaped with a pointed end of the triangle pointing away from the periphery of the base portion.

21. The combination of claim 19, wherein the spaced openings are formed along all sides of the skirt.

22. The combination of claim 18, wherein each second fastener comprises a pair of ties that are configured to pass through one respective opening and be tied to the frame.

23. The combination of claim 22, wherein the mattress platform is comprised of springs attached within an outer tubular frame, the ties being tied around the outer tubular frame of the mattress platform.

24. A method for installing a crib accessory to a crib having a mattress comprising the steps of:

- providing a crib liner having an integral skirt, the crib liner having a crib liner portion and a skirt portion that is attached to the crib liner portion and depends downwardly therefrom, wherein a front surface of the crib liner includes a first set of fasteners and a rear surface of the crib liner includes a second set of fasteners;
- positioning the crib liner relative to the crib such that the crib liner portion extends above the mattress and the skirt extends below the mattress;
- attaching the crib liner to a side rail of the crib using the first set of fasteners; and
- attaching the crib liner to a horizontal platform on which the mattress rests using the second set of fasteners.

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