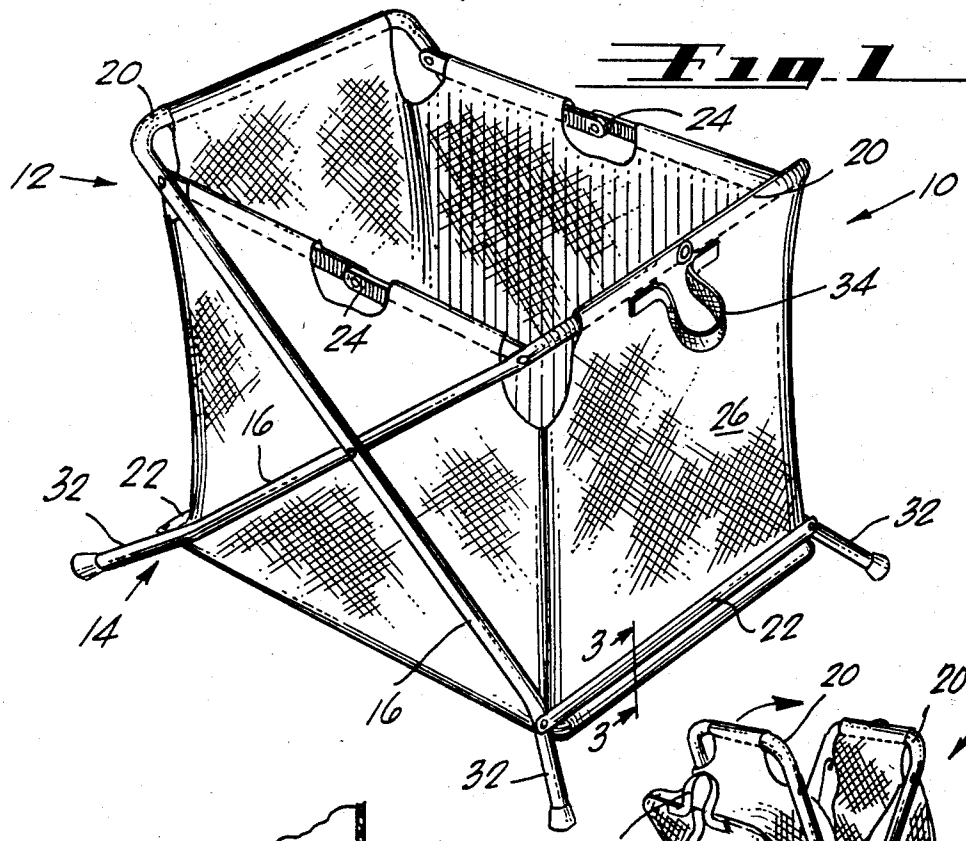
March 4, 1969 E. M. STILLWAUGH 3,430,273

COLLAPSIBLE PLAYPEN

Filed July 3, 1967

Fig. 1



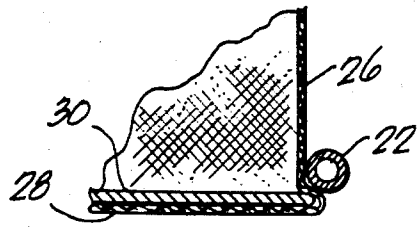


Fig. 3

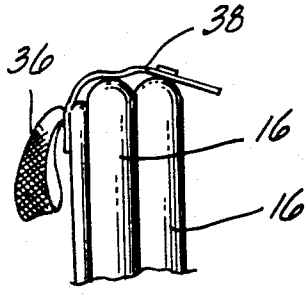


Fig. 4

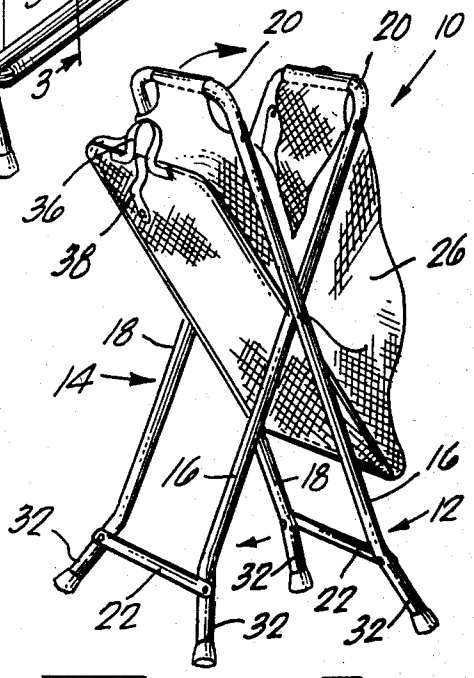


Fig. 2

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COLLAPSIBLE PLAYPEN

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U.S. Cl. 5—98 5 Claims
Int. Cl. A47d 7/00; A47c 17/70

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A collapsible playpen which uses its fabric sides and the base thereof to retain the device in the open position.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Playpens of all sizes and shapes have been known for many years usually such playpens are constructed of either wood, metal tubing, or plastic material. Desirable features of any playpen are: (1) That the construction be of sufficient strength to withstand movement and the constant abuse by the confined child; (2) That the playpen be of sufficient height to not permit the child to crawl out of the playpen; (3) As such playpens are quite often moved about they must be easily portable as by collapsing; (4) That the playpen be of light weight construction to facilitate ease of transportability; (5) That the playpen be easily and quickly opened and collapsed, and (6) That the playpen be constructed so as to resist overturning in normal use.

Heretofore, playpens have always been relatively large to give the confined child as much room to move about as possible as well as to locate the relative centers of gravity between the playpen and child at a sufficient distance to resist overturning. Naturally, as the playpen size increases, its weight also increases which results in the loss of ease of portability. Also, the playpens of the prior art have consistantly become more complicated in structure thereby substantially increasing the cost of manufacturing. Such complicated playpens usually include several interconnecting linkages operating in conjunction with an upper and lower frame besides the normal supporting legs. All of this supporting structure of these types of play pens are then encased with some type of fabric or netting.

SUMMARY

The playpen of this invention is primarily composed of a pair of U-shaped supporting members. The members are interconnected and are crossed to form a substantial X-shape. The sides of the playpen are composed of a fabric which retain a planar base which functions as the bottom of the playpen. With the playpen in the open position the longitudinal edges of the base are positioned on the lower side of each brace of each of the U-shaped supporting members. Thereby the fabric sides of the playpen become taut forming a rigid structure for a playpen. Also, the extremities of each of the U-shaped supporting members are flared outwardly a short distance away from the playpen. This flaring of the legs has the same affect as increasing the size of the playpen which decreases the possibility of the playpen turning over with the child therein.

As a result of the combined structure of the playpen of this invention, the following advantages have become apparent which are not shown wholly or in part in the prior art:

(1) By using the base of the playpen in combination with the fabric sides to coact with the basic supporting members a relatively strong structure is formed which is composed of few parts. It is specifically noted that most playpens in the prior art do not use the base thereof

to serve a dual role and function as an element of the supporting structure. Further, no playpen in the prior art is known to use the fabric sides or netting as load supporting walls to hold the device in the open and usable position;

(2) The manner in which the playpen collapses is such that all members of the device form a substantially planar unit. Thereby the device occupies a minimum amount of space when located in the collapsed position;

(3) Because of the relatively few parts of the playpen of this invention and the fact that several of the parts have dual functions thereby eliminating the need for additional members, the weight of this playpen is relatively low; and

(4) With the legs of this playpen being flared outwardly, the possibility that the child may overturn the device is sharply decreased.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 shows a pictorial view of the playpen of this invention in the open and usable position;

FIG. 2 is a pictorial view of this invention in an intermediate position prior to complete collapsing of the playpen;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along 3—3 of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a cut away view showing how the playpen of this invention is retained in the fully collapsed position.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SHOWN EMBODIMENT

Referring particularly to the drawing, the playpen of this invention is shown generally as **10**. Playpen **10** comprises a pair of U-shaped leg members **12** and **14**, each leg member having parallel legs **16** and **18**. The leg members **16** and **18** of each respective U-shaped member are integrally connected at one end thereof by means of rod **20**. Adjacent to the free ends of the leg members **16** and **18** of each member **12** and **14** is a brace **22**. Each of the U-shaped leg members **12** and **14** are connected centrally through the leg members **16** and **18** to form a crossed configuration. Members **12** and **14** are connected through two foldable braces **24**. Braces **24** are positioned near the upper extremities of the legs **16** and **18** adjacent the rod **20**, there being one brace **24** for each pair of legs **16** and **18**. It is to be understood that the braces **24** are pivotally connected to the legs **16** and **18** with each brace including a central pivotal connection.

A unitary piece of fabric **26** is supported from the rods **20** and the braces **24**. The fabric **26** forms a container shape having a bottom **28**. A base **30** is retained within the container shape of the fabric adjacent the bottom **28**. It is important to note that the longitudinal length of the base **30** permits it to be supported beneath each of the braces **22**. Also the width of the base **30** is less than the distance between legs **16** and **18** of the U-shaped members **12** and **14**. The lower extremities of the legs **16** and **18** are bent outward (flared) as at **32** away from the playpen **10** itself. This flaring **32** of the legs **16** and **18** creates the effect of the playpen **10** having a larger supporting base than it actually does. Therefore, the flaring **32** of the legs **16** and **18** decreases the possibility of the playpen turning over when a child is confined therein.

To facilitate manual carrying of the playpen, handle **34** is attached to fabric **26** adjacent the end of the base **30** which is the greatest distance from handle **34**. Snap strap **38** is provided adjacent handle **36** to retain the playpen **10** when it is located in the collapsed position.

To collapse the playpen of this invention, the following procedure is accomplished: With the playpen **10** in the open position as shown in FIG. 1 of the drawing the device can be used to confine a young child. When it is decided to collaps the playpen so that is may be more

easily transported, the portion of the base **30** near the handle **36** is manually moved from beneath the brace **22**. Such movement can be effected because of the flexibility of the fabric **26** which is slightly stretched at the opposite side of the base **30**. Having now removed the end of the base **30**, handle **36** is grasped with one hand and handle **34** is grasped with the other hand. The person then brings the handles together which causes the U-shaped members **12** and **14** to come together in a substantial planar relationship. Also, the base **30** lies substantially within the plane established by the folded leg members **12** and **14**. To retain the playpen in the collapsed position, strap **38** is snapped as is apparent from the drawing.

While the invention has been described in one embodiment, it is to be understood that the words which have been used are words of description rather than of limitation, and that changes within the scope of the appended claims may be made without departing from the true scope and spirit of the invention in its broader aspects.

I claim:

1. A collapsible playpen comprising:

a first and second pair of separate leg members, said separate leg members of each pair being integrally connected at one end thereof, said separate leg members of each pair being positionally spaced from one another, the free ends of each pair of separate leg members being joined through a brace, said brace being spaced from the extremities of said free ends, said first and second pair of leg members being pivotally connected together and in direct abutting relationship so that said leg members are capable of assuming at least an open and a closed position, said open position is when said first and second pairs of leg members form a substantial X-shape configuration, said closed position is when said first and second pairs form a substantial planar configuration, a foldable brace means connecting said first and second pairs of leg members which functions to limit the movement of said leg members and define said open position;

a flexible material forming the side walls of said playpen and being supportingly attached to said leg members and said foldable brace means, said flexible material forming the shape of an open top container with the open portion located adjacent the integral connection of said leg members, the bottom portion of the container being closed;

a ridged planar base being positioned within said container and located adjacent the closed bottom portion formed by said flexible material, the longitudinal edges of said base being capable of being positioned directly adjacent the underside of said brace of each pair of leg members upon which said flexible material forming said side walls assumes a taut configuration.

2. An apparatus as defined in claim **1** wherein:

said leg members of said first pair are substantially parallel with respect to one another, said leg members of said second pair are substantially parallel with respect to one another.

3. An apparatus as defined in claim **2** wherein:

the pivotal connection between said first and second pair of leg members is established approximately at the mid-point of the longitudinal length of the separate leg members.

4. An apparatus as defined in claim **3** wherein:

said flexible material comprises a pliable fabric.

5. An apparatus as defined in claim **1** wherein:

said free ends of each pair of separate leg members being flared outwardly from the playpen whereby the possibility of the playpen tipping over is diminished.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

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