

# Green Your Baby's Bed without spending a Bundle!

with TIPS from our very own GREEN MAMA's brand new book....

Manda Aufochs Gillespie has been a "green mama" since before it was "de rigeur" to be so. What sets her new book apart is that her wisdom is based not only on sound research, but on practical real-life experience - the kind where money and time are of the essence! You'll find Canadian (as well as US) resources and information and plenty of advice for families who want to go green, but don't have a ton of money to spend. Here's an exclusive sneak peek....

## EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER ONE: GREENING THE NURSERY

### Mattresses

Your baby will spend far more time sleeping, face pressed against her crib mattress and sheets, than awake. Investing in a truly green option is worth it. Be particularly vigilant for greenwashing because the terms "organic" and "natural" are almost meaningless when it comes to finding healthy mattresses. There are no government regulations governing their use in this industry. Indeed, a company can use organic cotton but still use harmful chemical flame retardants or rely on polyurethane foam. Do your research to find out what's really inside.

Polyurethane foam and polyester make up the majority of a crib mattress and are made from petroleum. They typically contain, and off-gas, various industrial solvents, such as toluene, benzene, and formaldehyde (again!). Polyurethane foam is highly combustible and can catch fire as easily as gasoline, thus it must be treated with chemical flame retardants.

Chemical flame retardants are generally "brominated," meaning they are treated or combined with bromine or a bromine compound to produce compounds such as Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). These persistent organic pollutants, a.k.a. POPs, will stay in the environment and in your child's body for a long, long time. While there, they can harm your child's brain and nervous system. They are considered neurotoxins that interfere with fetal development and so

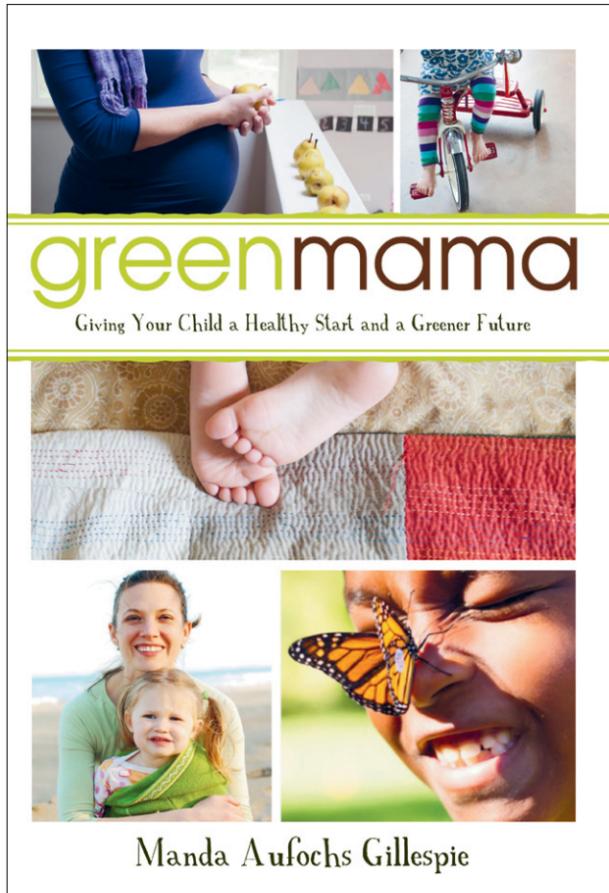
persistent that they have been found in the bodies of nearly every Canadian and American ever tested (including newborn babies) as well as in arctic seals that have never been near a mattress or nursing pillow in their lives. North Americans are especially at risk: PBDE levels are 75 times higher in North American women than their European counterparts, and at this level are known to interfere with fetal brain development. Health Canada has asked manufacturers to phase out certain PBDE compounds. However, PBDEs are still on the market and many of their replacements are not much better.

Most annoyingly, PBDEs don't just stay in the mattress or changing table pad. Just like a wild toddler, they are hard to contain. They escape and show up in dust all around the house. They slowly release over the life of the material to which they are applied, so mattresses don't get safer over time. In fact, some studies suggest that mattresses get significantly yuckier over time: not only do they continue to release PBDEs, but they can also accumulate dust mites, bacteria, and mould.

The vinyl (PVC) that encases most crib

mattresses contains both lead and phthalates and is considered one of the worst plastics for the environment and children alike. It helps keep the inner mattress "dry" if a baby leaks, but it can also hide mould, mildew, and dust mites. I think mattresses, like buildings, are less toxic and less likely to harbour mould if they can breathe. PVC is also flammable, so chemical fire retardants, often containing arsenic, antimony, and phosphorus, get applied to the mattress cover.

Be super skeptical of additives that sound green, but aren't proven to be. For instance, "soy foam" is just polyurethane-based foam with a touch of soy added to make it sound greener than it is.



From Green Mama, by Manda Aufochs Gillespie, © 2014. Reprinted by arrangement with Dundurn Press. www.dundurn.com

## WHEN MONEY MATTERS MORE

### DIY Baby Beds

The last thing my mom was thinking about when she had three kids on welfare was whether to get a natural mattress. Likewise, when our daughter was ready for a "real kid" mattress, we couldn't afford it at the time. So, what's affordable and does not contain foam, polyester, or vinyl?

Just about anything can work as a mattress for a little baby as long as it is firm, 100 percent cotton or pure wool (or a mix of the two), and there are no gaps for the baby to fall into along the edges. Be familiar with the best practices for preventing SIDS and add your Green Mama know-how to that.

When my youngest was a baby, she spent some time in a little cradle next to our bed, and we made her own "mattress" from layers of pure cotton towels with an organic sheet over them. It was easy to wash, firm, and fit tight.

For an older child, things get both harder and easier. After about a year, SIDS isn't an issue anymore, but your child might start to complain about sleeping on a few folded towels. When my daughter was four, we made do for months with a couple of camping pads topped with wool blankets. Finally, we bought an all-organic cotton futon. Futons are heavy and hard, but for a child they are an affordable alternative to a truly natural mattress. We eventually softened her bed up with an organic wool bed topper. By layering in this way, we slowly worked our way up to a healthy, comfortable bed without compromising quality. •



Photo courtesy of Candice Wong Photography

## Be as connected to nature as you are to your kids

### RECLAIMING THE COMMONS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

A Memoir and Manifesto

Heather Menzies

US/Can \$17.95

An evocative journey of personal transformation and an inspiring call to action, *Reclaiming the Commons* begins with Menzies reclaiming the memory of when her ancestors lived in direct relations with the land, in self-governing commons, and ends by reclaiming commons practices that can reconnect us with the earth, now.

"Menzies is a trenchant critic of the neoliberal version of capitalism for its destruction of community life, degradation of the environment and accelerating inequality. Unlike homst, however, she presents a seamlessly argued alternative vision."

—Ed Broadbent, Chair, the Broadbent Institute and former leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

"... a splendid, lyrical book -- exciting, well-written, scholarly and inspirational all at once."

—Susan J. Buck, Ph.D., Past president, International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC), Associate Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina – Greensboro

"When the great Crash, ecologic or economic, comes, Heather Menzies' brilliant critique, *Reclaiming the Commons for the Common Good*, provides an understanding of why it came about and a path towards a truly sustainable way for humanity to live on the planet."

—David Suzuki, author, *Wisdom of the Elders and The Sacred Balance*

"... an admirable, even noble, vision... expresses very eloquently what will have to be done if humanity is to escape the current race towards disaster."

—Noam Chomsky, linguist, philosopher, political theorist, MIT. Author, *Manufacturing Consent*



new society PUBLISHERS  
www.newsociety.com

