

I was kneeling on the living room rug at 11:14 p.m., flashlight from my phone balanced between my teeth, staring at a bag of spare screws that did not match the picture in the manual. Outside, the twins' nightlight was a pale orange dot through the curtains and a TTC bus rumbled down the street in that way it does in my neighborhood on Queen West, like someone dragging a metal stick across a grate. My partner had gone to the corner store at 9:30 to buy batteries and came back with exactly the wrong size. The crib instruction manual said "easy assembly." The crib and I had other ideas.

Why I dragged myself through three stores

I didn't want to be that parent who orders everything online sight unseen. So over the last six days I did what felt annoyingly middle-aged: I drove from Bloor to Scarborough, timed my trips to avoid rush hour and took notes. I visited a Baby & Kids Furniture Warehouse Toronto pop-up near St. Clair, a tiny showroom in Leslieville that calls itself a trusted baby furniture store in Toronto, and a larger retail spot near Dufferin that had nursery package deals on a big sale sign. Each place smelled slightly different — one had that new-wood smell, one had baby powder in the air, another smelled like coffee and sawdust. I kept thinking, why did I spend my Saturday doing this? Then I remembered I had to be the person who knows whether the crib converts into a toddler bed without requiring a PhD in engineering.

The weirdest part of the meeting with the sales rep

At the warehouse, the sales rep — a guy named Marco — looked exhausted in a way that made me feel better. He handed me three price sheets, two brochures, and a referral card for dressers & gliders at Toronto's downtown location. He quoted me numbers like 379, 749, and 1,100 and then added, almost apologetically, that the nursery sets in Toronto were on display but the store was low on the white finish. I asked about mattress compatibility and he said, "Most standard ones fit," and I nodded because I still don't fully understand mattress firmness standards, but he encouraged me to check a label. That was actually helpful. At least someone nudged me to check the mattress, because I almost assumed they're all the same.

Why I hesitated: safety, size, and sleep

I have a tiny apartment in Toronto — my bedroom is 9.5 feet wide — so the crib's footprint mattered more than I thought. I measured the space three times: once with the tape measure, once by shoe length (not recommended), and once by pacing the room, because I like approximations that involve my actual body. A crib that converts to a toddler bed sounded great, except that conversion kits added cost and could mean extra pieces that you had to store. I kept circling back to safety: slat spacing, JPMA certification, the recalled models list. I read labels until my eyes hurt and then had to Google what a "drop-side" mechanism even meant, because I had only a vague memory of a recall from the early 2000s.

The final damage to my wallet (and why I felt okay about it)

Numbers: the crib I liked was \$679 on sale from \$899, the mattress was \$129, and a basic dresser that matched was \$349 but came with a "free" changing tray if I wanted it. Delivery was \$49 across the city, or they offered in-store pickup for no extra charge. The warehouse gave me a 10% discount if I bought a nursery furniture set in Toronto — they called it a package deal — because they had an open-box model on display. I took it. The total out-the-door was \$1,123. I paid with a debit card at 3:02 p.m. On a gray Thursday, and my email confirmation had the exact delivery window: June 15, between 9 a.m. And noon. I appreciated the specificity. Small victories.

The small things that mattered more than reviews

People leave reviews for the big things: price, shipping, missing parts. What mattered to me were the small, annoying realities. The crib's assembly required a hex wrench that wasn't in the kit; the hardware bag included three extra long screws labeled "spare" and one that was clearly for something else. The mattress fit snugly with a 2 cm gap on one side which made me feel better than a 5 mm gap would have — irrational, but honest. The dresser's sliding mechanism squeaked the first three times I used it; the store said it was a break-in thing and offered a lubricant suggestion over the phone. Little details like these became the story of our purchase.

Where I almost made a dumb mistake

There was a beautiful mid-century crib in oak at a boutique near Roncesvalles that I almost bought because it looked amazing next to the living room couch. It was stylish, but it had a higher mattress base and fewer mattress height adjustments. I imagined our newborn being fine, but the 3-am wake-up feedings when the baby would be over 30 pounds in a few months made me rethink it. I [Babywarehouse](#) asked the boutique owner about lowering the mattress and she said "you can, but you need a conversion set." She was honest, and that saved me from a very pretty mistake.



What I wish someone told me sooner

No one told me that gliders are silently divisive. At the trusted baby furniture store in Toronto's east end, every glider felt like a life-saver — plush, slow-recline, like a hug. At ***babywarehouse locations Ontario*** the warehouse, the gliders were firmer, compact, and cheaper. I couldn't justify a \$699 glider for a tiny apartment, though. So I bought a mid-range \$329 option that swivels and doesn't feel like it will fall apart after a year. I keep thinking, will I regret not getting the expensive one? Maybe. I also still don't fully understand how warranty transfers work between stores, and one rep said it was store-specific, another said it's manufacturer-specific. I made a note to follow up.

A short list of things I actually brought when shopping (because I learned the hard way)

- measuring tape
- photos of the room from multiple angles
- a list of questions about mattresses and certifications

Why this felt like less of a chore by the end

By the time everything was in the apartment and the crib stood assembled (bag of extra screws still unmatched), I felt oddly proud. Not of spending money, but of the process: measuring, asking dumb questions, checking the mattress label, saying no to a set that didn't fit the room even though it matched the curtains. Buying nursery

furniture in Toronto felt like a small civic duty — pick something safe, practical, and that tells you nothing about your design taste for the next five years.

I don't have a perfect answer for what matters most. For me it was a mix of size constraints, safety checks, and being able to touch the furniture before I handed over a card. If you want a single takeaway: go see at least one place in person, even if you plan to shop online. And keep a flashlight nearby for midnight assembly sessions. The bus outside will keep grumbling, and you'll be glad you checked the mattress label.

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