

I was hunched over a half-assembled crib in my living room at 10:37 p.m., Allen keys and screws scattered like confetti, when my partner asked if I was proud of myself yet. I laughed, wiped baby drool off the instruction sheet — no idea where that came from — and realized I still had to return the dresser because the drawer slides squeaked in a way that made me worry about tiny fingers. That exact scene is how I landed on most of the choices for our nursery, and why I ended up driving across the city on a weekday looking for a replacement.

The weirdest part of the shopping day

We started at a place downtown on Queen West after a quick Google search and a few parent forum recommendations. The store was bright, and the sales associate offered us coffee, which was nice because it was raining hard outside and the tram had taken 45 minutes to get us there from Leslieville. The associate, who introduced herself as Priya, was helpful but also kind of pushy about package deals. At one point she said, "If you get the nursery package deal, you save 15 percent today," and I almost bought it right then because my brain was tired from sleep training articles and choosing paint swatches.

I walked out of that shop with a catalog, two price quotes, and a headache. Later that week I spent a wet Sunday afternoon at Baby & Kids Furniture Warehouse Toronto, which felt less curated and more like a place where you could actually touch things for longer than three seconds. A sales rep there let me sit in a glider for 20 minutes while my partner paced outside on the phone. I could tell the glider's cushion would eventually compress, but I also knew which fabric would hide stains. Practical wins.

Why I hesitated over cribs

Cribs felt like the most loaded decision. We wanted something that would convert into a toddler bed, because everyone on the parenting Facebook groups swore conversion was the only sane option. But the conversion kits were not cheap. I liked a white crib in a showroom on Danforth, but the rails were more decorative than sturdy. The salesperson quoted \$549 and then added, "If you add the matching dresser, we can do \$499 for the crib." That's when I realized I was being sold a look as much as a bed.

We ended up buying a simple solid-wood convertible crib from a trusted baby furniture store in Toronto that had been recommended by our neighbor. It cost **Get more info** \$720 including tax, which felt reasonable after getting quotes ranging from \$450 to \$950. I still don't fully understand how mattress firmness ratings work, so I plumped for a mid-range mattress that the store insisted was "breathable." It was \$140 and I slept better the first night knowing there was at least one thing I didn't have to debate.

The dresser saga and the glider that saved me

The dresser turned into a saga. I bought one from a weekend market vendor who promised delivery in two weeks for \$220. Two weeks turned into three and the delivery crew showed up without the matching baby-proofing hardware. I spent an hour on the phone with customer service and another 20 minutes taping foam bumpers onto the corners while waiting for a replacement kit.

The glider though, that's the small luxury. We tested three. The winner was deep, with a high back and higher armrests, fabric that felt like it would survive spit-up, and a gentle swivel. It was pricey at \$399, but the first night I sat there at 2 a.m. Feeding and staring at the ceiling, I whispered, "worth it," to no one.

What I brought to stores (short list)

- A tape measure — take it.
- Photos of the nursery, including the window and the power outlet placement.
- A list of deal-breakers: convertible crib, dresser with soft-close drawers, and a washable glider.

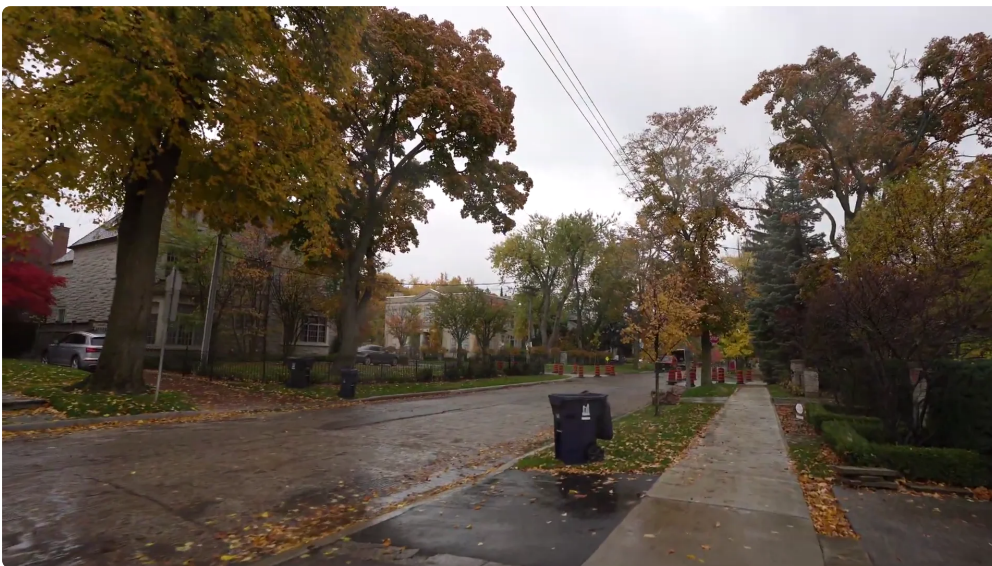
How I compared prices without losing my mind

I made a spreadsheet because I am the kind of person who uses spreadsheets to combat anxiety. It had columns for price, delivery time, return policy, and whether the store provided assembly. Two places insisted on in-home assembly for an extra \$89. I said no thank you, because if I can assemble a crib at midnight with an Allen key, I can do the dresser too. I kept mental notes about the vibe of each store. The bigger chains had better return policies. The smaller shops had character and a willingness to negotiate.

I also walked into Baby & Kids Furniture Warehouse Toronto with a printed quote from a boutique store and asked if they could match it. They did, but they also offered free delivery if we spent over \$1,000. That small saving nudged us toward buying the dresser and glider there, all in one trip. I still cringe thinking about the salesperson's polished line about "package deals," but the math added up.

Minor annoyances that actually mattered

The real friction was logistical. Parking in midtown on a Saturday was 18 minutes of circling and one missed U-turn that cost me three extra dollars in traffic tickets if my luck had been worse. Delivery windows that promised "between 9 a.m. And 5 p.m." Are a lie, or at least a friendly suggestion. We lost half a day waiting for a truck. Also, the small print about returns: some stores will accept returns but not the crib mattress after it's been unwrapped. I remember tearing back the plastic and feeling slightly panicked.



What I wish someone told me

I wish someone had told me to ask about the finishing process on the wood. Some cribs have more volatile organic compounds than others, and since we live in a century-old row house, airflow is limited. I also wish I had tested the dresser drawers with a full load of clothes. We learned the hard way that cheap runner slides make a satisfying "clunk" when shut, which is the opposite of sleep-friendly.

Final damage to my wallet

I tracked everything. Crib: \$720. Mattress: \$140. Dresser: \$420. Glider: \$399. Delivery and assembly we did ourselves except for one small delivery fee of \$45. All in, roughly \$1,724 before taxes. I had budgeted \$2,000, so I felt sheepishly proud.

If you want a quick takeaway without hearing my griping

- Trust your local recommendations, but test things in person.
- Bring measurements and photos.

- Watch the delivery fine print, and ask obvious-sounding questions out loud.

Driving back from the warehouse on the Gardiner, the sun had just broken through and my partner joked that we were building more than furniture. I didn't have a perfect plan for sleep schedules or baby-proofing, but the nursery felt like the first big grown-up decision that wasn't just about us. Tomorrow I will try to install the crib rail guards properly, and maybe finally read that mattress guide. For now I have a mostly assembled crib, a squeak-free glider, and the peculiar calm that comes after a weekend of decisions. If you ask me where we bought most of it, I'll tell you the honest thing: a mix of boutique advice, a stop at Baby & Kids Furniture Warehouse Toronto, and a last-minute match on a quote that saved us a bit of money. Not glamorous, but it works.

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