



Healthy Start FAQ: Safe Sleep Best Practices – What Healthy Start Grantees Need to Know

On July 14, Dr. Shavon Artis Dickerson, director of the Safe to Sleep Campaign out of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), facilitated a webinar about safe sleep. During the presentation Dr. Artis Dickerson discussed current national statistics around sleep-related infant deaths, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS), safe sleeping practices, and how Healthy Start grantee programs can teach and encourage safe sleep practices with their clients.

Following Dr. Artis Dickerson's presentation, Erin Reiney, director of Injury and Violence Prevention Programs with MCHB, briefly presented on the National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep, otherwise known as NAPPSS. Erin Reiney reviewed the goal and implemental activities of NAPPSS and provided program contact information.

In case you or a colleague missed the webinar, a recording of the presentation can be found on [the EPIC Center's training calendar](#).

During the webinar, attendees asked several great questions, all of which have been addressed below.

How can grantees access hard copies of the Safe to Sleep Campaign materials and brochures?

Visit the [Safe to Sleep website](#) and select "campaign materials" to find materials and order online. Materials can also be ordered directly over the phone through the information resource center by calling 1-800-505-CRIB (2742). All materials are free of charge.

How safe are bassinets and how would Dr. Artis Dickerson recommend approaching parents who use bassinets beyond a safe age?

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) works with the Safe to Sleep Campaign to ensure that sleep products available for purchase meet safe-sleep standards. The approved list was recently updated and includes new standards for bassinets, meaning that all bassinets currently sold by retailers are all safety approved by CPSC.

Dr. Artis Dickerson recommended that grantees introduce clients to all available sleep products and to suggest to parents that once an infant outgrows a bassinet, he/she can sleep in a number of other much safer options such as a crib or play yard. Also encourage clients to check that any second-hand items purchased for sleep still meet current safety regulation standards.

What are some ways to soothe parents concerned about babies rolling onto their stomachs during sleep?

The central point to remember is to start the baby on his/her back before each sleep session. Once a baby is able to roll over autonomously, parents don't need to worry about repositioning an infant because if they're strong enough to roll onto their stomach, they're strong enough to roll back onto their back, decreasing the risk of staying asleep on their stomach for a dangerous period of time.



What should breastfeeding Moms be told about using a pacifier?

Dr. Artis Dickerson emphasized that pacifiers should not be introduced until breastfeeding is firmly established. Since babies latch at different ages, it is up to Mom to determine when latching has successfully taken place before introducing a pacifier. The use of a pacifier is optional and should be the decision of the mother.

There does seem to be evidence that babies who fall asleep with a pacifier are less likely to die from SIDS, indicating some protective effect of the suckling action during sleep.

How should grantees advise clients about using a blanket in the crib for temperature regulation?

Using sleep clothing is the most highly recommended method of keeping babies warm and comfortable, but if sleep sacks or onesies are not available and a blanket is needed, firmly tuck the blanket along each side and along the foot of the crib with the babies arms on the outside of the blanket. This blanket placement will decrease the chances of the blanket becoming tangled or bundled around the baby's face.