



## Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment – Safe Sleep Practices and National Trends for Risk Reduction

### Healthy Start Ambassadors' Training Kit

This training kit contains information and materials to assist you in educating communities about sleep-related deaths and ways to reduce the risk of them happening. We hope that the enclosed resource guide and educational materials are helpful as you share information with others about reducing sleep-related infant deaths.

The materials in this kit include the revised recommendations for reducing infant deaths in the sleep environment, released by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in June 2022.

### How to Make This Kit Work for You

#### Inside This Kit

This kit is designed to help organizations like yours communicate clear, consistent, and creative messages about keeping infants safe during sleep in your community and across the nation. All the materials included support the education efforts and messages of the national [Safe to Sleep public health education campaign](#). The kit provides you with all the materials and information you need to promote back sleeping and other safe practices to reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths.

#### The kit includes:

- [Sleep-related Infant Death Data](#)
- Responses to questions about SIDS
- How to promote back sleeping in your community
- How to get involved

#### Articles

- [Closing the Gaps in Safe Sleep Education in Underserved Populations](#)
- [Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding Resources in 11 Languages](#)
- [It's Past Time to Prevent SIDS and Sleep-Related Infant Deaths](#)

#### Educational Resources

- [Safe Sleep 101](#)
- [Guide for Using the Conversation Modules in Community Settings](#)
- [Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding Myths and Facts Documents](#)
- [Safe Sleep FAQ and Infographic for Childcare Settings](#)
- [Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding Resources in 11 Languages](#)

- [Baby Registry Guide](#)
- [The American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)'s Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2022 Recommendations for Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment](#)

### Social Media Resources

- [SIDS Awareness Month Social Media Tool Kit \(2021\)](#)

### Additional Resources

- [Safe to Sleep Campaign](#)  
Phone: (800) 505-CRIB (2742) (toll-free to order materials)
- [National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep \(NAPPSS\)](#)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/sids/data.htm>
- [Global Infant Safe Sleep Center \(GISS Center\)](#)

## American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Sleep-related Infant Deaths: 2022 Updated Recommendations

### A-level Recommendations

- Back to sleep for every sleep.
- Use a firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface to reduce the risk of suffocation or wedging/entrapment.
- Feeding of human milk is recommended because it is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS.
- It is recommended that infants sleep in the parents' room, close to the parents' bed, but on a separate surface designed for infants, ideally for at least the first 6 months.
- Keep soft objects, such as pillows, pillow-like toys, quilts, comforters, mattress toppers, fur-like materials, and loose bedding, such as blankets and nonfitted sheets, away from the infant's sleep area to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocation, entrapment/wedging, and strangulation.
- Offering a pacifier at naptime and bedtime is recommended to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Avoid smoke and nicotine exposure during pregnancy and after birth.
- Avoid alcohol, marijuana, opioids, and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth.
- Avoid overheating and head covering in infants.
- It is recommended that pregnant people obtain regular prenatal care.
- It is recommended that infants be immunized in accordance with guidelines from the AAP and CDC.
- Do not use home cardiorespiratory monitors as a strategy to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Supervised, awake tummy time is recommended to facilitate development and to minimize the risk of positional plagiocephaly. Parents are encouraged to place the infant in tummy time while awake and supervised for short periods of time beginning soon after hospital discharge, increasing incrementally to at least 15 to 30 min total daily by age 7 weeks.
- It is essential that physicians, nonphysician clinicians, hospital staff, and childcare providers endorse and model safe infant sleep guidelines from the beginning of pregnancy.
- It is advised that media and manufacturers follow safe sleep guidelines in their messaging and advertising to promote safe sleep practices as the social norm.
- Continue the NICHD "Safe to Sleep" campaign, focusing on ways to reduce the risk of all sleep-related deaths. Pediatricians and other maternal and child health providers can serve as key promoters of the campaign messages.

### B-level Recommendations

- Avoid the use of commercial devices that are inconsistent with safe sleep recommendations.

### C-level Recommendations

- There is no evidence to recommend swaddling as a strategy to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Continue research and surveillance on the risk factors, causes, and pathophysiological mechanisms of sleep-related deaths, with the ultimate goal of eliminating these deaths entirely.

## Responses to Questions About Reducing Sleep-related Infant Death

### My aunt told me my baby could choke while sleeping on their back. Is that true?

Some people believe babies who sleep on their backs will choke if they spit up or vomit while sleeping, but babies automatically swallow or cough up such fluid. Doctors have found no increase in choking or other problems in babies who sleep on their backs.

### My mom told me I slept on my stomach; what's wrong with my baby sleeping on theirs?

A few years back, the American Academy of Pediatrics first recommended back sleeping to reduce the likelihood of SIDS. At that time, more than 5,000 babies in the U.S. died from SIDS every year. As more babies began to sleep on their backs, SIDS rates have decreased to less than 1,400 deaths a year.

### What if my baby can't adjust to sleeping on their back?

Some babies don't like sleeping on their backs at first, but most get used to it quickly. The earlier you start placing your baby on their back to sleep, the faster they will become used to the position. Also, babies can benefit from sleeping on their backs. Babies on their backs can move their arms and legs and look around more easily.

### What about new products designed to keep my baby in a certain position during sleep?

There is no proof that any such products will help lower the risk of SIDS. Back sleeping is the best position to reduce SIDS risk. During the time of greatest risk (2 to 4 months of age) most babies are not able to turn over from their backs to their stomachs.

### What if my baby's grandparents or caregivers want to place my baby to sleep on their stomach at naptime?

Make sure everyone knows to place your baby on their back to sleep at naptime and nighttime. Explain to everyone why back sleeping is the best.

### Are there times when my baby should be on their stomach?

Yes, your baby should have plenty of "tummy time" when they are awake and being watched. This also helps make your baby's neck and shoulder muscles stronger.

### Will my baby get "flat spots" on the back of their head from back sleeping?

Flat spots on the back of a baby's head are usually a temporary condition that goes away a few months after the baby begins to sit up. Tummy time, when your baby is awake, is an excellent way to reduce flat spots.

### At what age is a SIDS death likely to happen?

SIDS is the sudden death of a child under 1 year of age. It is the leading cause of death for infants after 1 month of age and occurs most frequently between the second and fourth month. The incidence of SIDS drops dramatically after 6 months of age.

## How to Promote Back Sleeping in Your Community

Here are some tips on how you can use the materials in this kit to reduce the risk of SIDS in your community:

**Responses to Questions About SIDS**—Provide a training session for your organization’s staff and volunteers on how to address difficult questions from people in the community who are not aware of the benefits of back sleeping. Identify a small group of trained volunteers who are willing to go out into the community and educate people about the importance of back sleeping.

**Brochure**—Distribute the “Keep Our Babies Safe” brochure (see Appendix) at local group meetings (e.g., faith organizations, community centers), hospital and physicians’ waiting rooms, libraries, senior citizen centers, and other locations throughout the community. You can distribute the brochure at local community events, such as fairs, block parties, cultural celebrations, and other observances. You may want to join forces with local hospitals so that a copy of the brochure is given to parents when their newborn is released from the hospital.

**Myths and Facts About SIDS**—Sponsor local “town hall” meetings or community forums to discuss the myths and facts associated with SIDS among African Americans and how individuals and organizations in the community can work together to educate the public. Use [this sample community flyer](#) to promote your event.

## How to Get Involved

Even if you aren’t part of an organization or agency that’s actively promoting the Back to Sleep message, or your time during a given week is limited, you can still get involved. Here are a few ideas:

1. Contact your local health department or organizations that have SIDS programs in your community. Ask if they offer information on back sleeping to new or expectant parents. If they do, tell them you hope they will continue to do so in the future because it’s an important message that can ultimately save lives. If they don’t, tell them how important it is and give them the toll-free number for the Back to Sleep ordering line (1-800-505-CRIB) for free brochures, videos, and other materials.
2. Write letters, send e-mails, or make telephone calls to local community leaders to tell them about the Back to Sleep campaign and the importance of reaching African Americans. Encourage them to get involved and to support community efforts to get the message out.
3. Don’t forget senior citizen centers, churches, and other community- or faith- oriented groups. Everyone needs to learn about the importance of back sleeping and other ways to reduce the risk of SIDS. Ask the staff at these organizations if you can display copies of campaign materials, such as the brochure or the [“Myths and Facts About SIDS” handout](#), in a place where people can pick them up.
4. Make a list of everyone you know who has an infant under the age of 1, anyone you know who is expecting a child, and everyone you think may become a mother or father in the next few years. Next time you see them, tell them about your involvement in the Back to Sleep campaign and its messages. It’s a subtle yet effective way to get the message out.

- If you have the time to make a larger commitment, coordinate a workshop or presentation using the training materials provided in this packet. The materials are designed to be adapted for workshops or brief presentations. You can also contact organizations in your community with an interest in the safety and well-being of infants. Tell them that you want to get more involved in educating people in the community about the importance of back sleeping and that you are willing to work as a volunteer. Together, you can decide how your skills and life experience can best be used to educate others in the African American community about SIDS.

These are just a few ideas about how you can get involved in educating your community about SIDS. You may have your own ideas too, but the most important thing is that you get involved.

Many of the national organizations that support the Back to Sleep campaign have state and local chapters or affiliates. Working together, we can help save infant lives!

## Appendix

### Keep Our Babies Safe Brochure

**Keep our babies safe**

- Put the baby to sleep on his/her back in a safety-approved crib or bassinet on a firm mattress covered with a tight-fitted sheet.
- Do not use bumper pads, blankets or pillows.
- Keep cribs, cribs and other cribs away from baby's sleep environment.
- Breastfeed baby.
- Room share, don't bed share.
- Offer pacifier at nap and night time after breastfeeding is going well.
- Make sure babies are immunized.
- Don't smoke in your house or around baby.
- Do not let baby get too hot.

**KEEP OUR BABIES SAFE**

**What is Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID)?**

Death of an infant younger than 1 year of age that occurs suddenly and unexpectedly.

Determined after a full investigation, which includes an autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the infant's and family's medical history. These deaths may be diagnosed as suffocation, asphyxia, airway obstruction, infection, congenital respiratory disease, cardiac arrhythmias, trauma (accidental or non-accidental), or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

**What is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)?**

The leading cause of death in infants between 1 month and 1 year of age.

A sudden and silent medical disorder that can happen to a seemingly healthy infant.

A death often associated with sleep and with little or no signs of suffering.

Determined only after autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the infant's and family's medical histories.

A diagnosis of exclusion in which the cause of death can be determined only after ruling out other causes.

Source: Sings-Aspner Infant Deaths, Capitalist 2002; Recommendations for Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment

**Working to reduce Sleep-related Infant Death**

**3500**

The number of U.S. deaths involving SUID, SIDS, is nearly 3,500 annually per year (approximately 100 deaths occurring per day).

**140**

African American infants

**2x**

Non-Hispanic Whites

**3x**

Hispanic infants

**12.9x**

Black children are 12.9 times more at risk of SIDS than White children.

**10x**

that during increases the risk of SIDS by 10 times.

**4x**

Babies who receive unaccustomed breast increases the risk of SIDS by 4 times.

**We know that SIDS is not:**

Preventable, but the risk can be reduced.

Caused by venting or choking.

Caused by GFP vaccine or other immunizations.

Contagious.

The result of child abuse or neglect.

The cause of every unexpected infant death.

**Factors that increase the risk of SIDS for babies**

- Low birth weight (less than 5 pounds).
- Premature births (less than 37 weeks).
- Multiple births (e.g., twins, triplets).

### Healthy Start Safe Sleep Ambassador Sample Presentation

**GISS CENTER**  
GIBBS INFANT SAFE SLEEP CENTER

**Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment**

Safe Sleep Practices and National Trends for Risk Reduction

HEALTHY start TA & SUPPORT CENTER | NICHQ NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH QUALITY

This webinar is hosted by the Healthy Start TA & Support Center in partnership with the GISS Center.