

## Infant Safe Sleep

### LESSON SUMMARY

This Safe Sleep lesson will inform participants about the components of the new “Safe to Sleep” campaign, the importance of safe sleep practices, how to create a safe sleep environment for infants, and ways to maintain oneself as a happy and healthy caregiver. It is important to teach safe sleep to avoid consequences associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and/or Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID). There are practices caregivers should use to reduce the infant’s risk of unintended death or serious unintended harm. The main purpose of the updated “Safe to Sleep” campaign is to highlight the importance of a safe sleep environment for infants including the “ABCs of Sleeping” which was a critical part of the first campaign.

This 45-minute lesson will help participants understand how they can provide a safe sleeping environment for their infant. They will have the knowledge to practice safe sleep with the infant in their care. After this lesson they should be confident in their skills and knowledge of infant safe sleep and understand the importance of a safe sleep environment.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Understand the “Safe to Sleep” campaign
- Create a safe sleep environment
- Understand safe sleep practices
- Recognize the need for self-care as caregivers

### LESSON MATERIALS

#### Clear the Crib Activity

Materials needed for activity:

- A crib, bassinet, portable crib, or a “mock” crib using a basic cardboard box or plastic storage bin.
- Up to 10 pieces of “crib clutter” or inappropriate items such as:
  - Baby wipes
  - A bottle
  - A pacifier with a string (any item attached to a string or cord is a strangulation risk)
  - Soft toys or stuffed items

- A blanket (in the crib or hanging over the side of the crib—neither is recommended)
- A book
- A pillow
- A Baby Lounger
- Extra diapers
- Extra clothes
- Several acceptable items for the sleep area, such as:
  - Pacifier by itself/not attached to a string, cloth, or stuffed toy
  - Fitted sheet
  - A doll or other object to represent a baby
- Digital or printed copies of the [What Does A Safe Sleep Environment Look Like?](#) Handout (hyperlink)
- Digital or printed copies of the [champion certificate](#) (PDF 109 KB) and/or [participation certificate](#) (PDF 72 KB)
- A stopwatch, timer app, or other timekeeping device
- A cellphone or another video recording device (optional)
- [a printed “prescription”](#) (PDF 378 KB) for the activity (optional)

## Safe Sleep Web Activity

- Link in PowerPoint Slide

## Recalled Items Activity

- Use pictures or go to a website of recalled items (especially popular items) and talk about why they might be recalled or ways they could be unsafe for the infant.

## INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

### Slide 1: Welcome and title

### Slide 2: Lesson Objectives

- The history of the “Safe to Sleep” campaign
- The importance of safe sleep practices
- How to create a safe sleep environment

*“Welcome to the Sleep Safe presentation. The topics discussed during this session are very important and hopefully we can provide you with more information regarding safer sleep for infants. These topics are very relevant because it is information that will keep the infant and the caregiver safe. The goal for the presentation is to help/teach up to date information on the “Safe to Sleep” campaign, the importance of safe sleep, and how to*

*create a safe sleep environment for infants, as well as some helpful resources for mothers related to postpartum.”*

### **Slide 3: Terms to Know**

**Note that decline in sleep related deaths due to the ABCs of safe sleep and focus on safe sleep environments**

Terms- Sleep-related infant death, SIDS, and SUID

*Say, “Before beginning the lesson, let’s review a few terms we need to know. Talk about the following-*

*Sleep-related infant death: A sudden, unexpected infant death that occurs during an observed or unobserved sleep period, or in a sleep environment.*

*SIDS: Cause assigned to infant deaths that cannot be explained after a thorough case investigation, including a death scene investigation, autopsy, and review of the clinical history.*

*SUID: A sudden and unexpected death, whether explained or unexplained (including SIDS), occurring during infancy.”*

## **LESSON** (30 minutes)

### **Slide 4: Importance of Infant Safe Sleep**

*“Before going into the lesson, we are going to go over a few true or false questions with each other to test our current knowledge of safe sleep.”*

1. True or False? The rate of sleep-related infant deaths has declined substantially since the 1990s.
2. True or False? One way to decrease the risk of sleep-related death is to room share with infants until they are at least 6 months of age.
3. True or False? Putting an infant to sleep in a crib with padded cloth bumpers is a safe way to prevent sleep-related infant death.
4. True or False? Infants should always be placed on their side or their stomachs for safe sleep.
5. True or False? SIDS is most common between 1 month and 4 months.
6. True or False? There are ways to prevent SIDS.

Read the questions on the slide aloud and then provide further explanations for each answer by reading the following:

1. True. In 1990, the rate of SIDS was 130.3 per 100,000 live births. In 2020, it was 38.4 deaths per 100,000 live births.
2. True. Room sharing or having the infant sleep alone in their own bed or bassinet in the same room as the parents, helps to decrease the risk of SIDS. This is very different from bed sharing

or allowing the infant to sleep in the same space as the parents, which increases the risk of SIDS.

3. False. Bumpers can increase the risk of suffocation, strangulation, and entrapment if the infant rolls over into them and cannot move.
4. False. The safest way for an infant to sleep is alone, on their back, in their crib. Placing the infant on their back decreases the risk of choking and keeps the airway open.
5. True. SIDS can happen anytime during a baby's first year, but the majority of SIDS deaths happen with babies between 1 month and 4 months of age.
6. False. There are no known ways to fully prevent SIDS but there are several effective methods for reducing the risk of SIDS.

### **Slide 5: #ClearTheCrib**

Say, "Let's do an activity to test your knowledge of infant safe sleep."

- Materials listed above on Pg 1 and 2.

### **Slide 6: History of "Safe to Sleep" Campaign**

Go into the history of the "Safe to Sleep" Campaign.

*Say, "The Safe to Sleep Campaign, formerly the Back to Sleep Campaign, began in 1994. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of sudden infant death, or SIDS, and to educate the public on ways to reduce the risk of SIDS. It focused on laying infants on their backs to sleep rather than their stomachs to reduce the risk of SIDS. Before the campaign launched, placing infants on their stomachs to sleep was acceptable until research demonstrated a strong link between infant death and stomach sleeping. While the initial Back to Sleep campaign made a huge impact in decreasing the risk of SIDS, other sleep-related causes of infant death weren't being addressed and were still increasing"*

- The focus of the campaign shifted in 2012 and was expanded to include other sleep-related causes of infant death, rebranding as the "Safe to Sleep" campaign
- Now, the Safe to Sleep campaign message includes both back sleeping and safe sleep environments as key to safe infant sleep
- Still, 3500 infants die unexpectedly every year, and over time, the SUID rate has remained stagnant

### **Slide 7: Stats**

Read slide:

- "Current data demonstrates that of these 3500 annual deaths, 41% are due to SIDS, 32% are due to an unknown cause, and 27% are due to accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed"

### **Slide 8: Why the “Safe to Sleep” Campaign began**

Discuss why the Back to Sleep campaign made a huge impact and how the “Safe to Sleep” campaign expands on the sleep environment and other things that can make sleep dangerous.

Use these facts:

- While the initial Back to Sleep campaign made a huge impact in decreasing the risk of SIDS, other sleep-related causes of infant death weren’t being addressed and were still increasing
- The focus of the campaign shifted in 2012 and was expanded to include other sleep-related causes of infant death, rebranding as the “Safe to Sleep” campaign
- Now, the Safe to Sleep campaign message includes both back sleeping and safe sleep environments as key to safe infant sleep

### **Slide 9: How to Decrease Risk**

*Say, “Now that we have gone over the history of the Safe to Sleep Campaign and how it evolved over time, let’s go over current recommendations to decrease the risk of sleep-related infant deaths. In 2022, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated its recommendations on safe sleep practices for the first time since 2016. The updates highlighted new evidence around ways to decrease the risk of SUIDS, including back sleeping, safe sleep environments, and encouraging healthy development.”*

### **Slide 10: Ways to Practice Safe Sleep**

*Say, “First let’s go over some ways to ensure the infant is sleeping safe...”*

**BACK SLEEPING:**

- *The safest sleep position is on the back. Back sleeping lowers the risk for SIDS compared to side or stomach sleepers.*
  - *Stomach and side sleeping elevates SIDS risk by 45 times.*
- *Babies who can roll from back to stomach AND from stomach to back independently can be left in whatever position they want for sleep.*
- *Infants who can only roll one way must be repositioned to their backs.*
- *All babies, including those preterm and those with reflux, must be put to sleep on their backs until age 1.*

### **Slide 11: Back Sleeping**

*Say, “This image shows the difference in the infants’ airway opening when sleeping on their backs versus sleeping on their stomachs. The video will explain the difference and why it’s important to place babies on their backs to sleep.” PLAY THE VIDEO.*

### **Slide 12: Safe Sleep Environment**

*Say, “As we learned from the history of the Safe to Sleep campaign, back sleeping isn’t the only way to reduce the risk of SIDS. Putting infants to sleep in a safe environment is just as important. Let’s go over ways to create a safe sleep environment.”*

- Alcohol- and tobacco-free prenatal and postnatal environments
  - Infants exposed to secondhand smoke are four times more likely to die from SIDs than infants in smoke-free environments.
- Share a room (but not a bed) with the infant for at least the first 6 months. It is safer to share a room than letting the infant sleep alone in their own room.
- No co-sleeping in the same sleep space between the infant and adults, siblings, pets, or other individuals.

*Say, “to continue ways to provide the infant with a safe sleep environment: Provide the infant with their own safe-sleep space. A safe-sleep place would be a safety-approved bassinet or crib with a flat surface and no other objects inside other than a tightly fitted sheet covering the mattress. When determining the location of the bassinet or crib, make sure all objects around it are out of reach of the child so they can’t pull anything in with them. Never allow the infant to sleep elevated, in a positioner or a car seat without constant supervision as it elevates the risk for positional asphyxiation, which means they cannot breathe properly because the position of their body blocks their airway.”*

- Always keep infant’s sleep space within a safe distance so they can be monitored and smoothed as needed
- Maintain a comfortable temperature, not too hot or over-bundled in swaddles and clothing
- Before they can roll, use an approved swaddle or wearable blanket to keep the baby warm and calm the morrow (“startle”) reflect. Once they can roll, immediately stop swaddling.

### **Slide 13: Encouraging Healthy Development:**

*Say, “Encouraging healthy development in the infant also reduces the risk of SIDS. This includes regular prenatal and postnatal care for the mother to ensure healthy eating, hygiene, sleep, and to watch for signs of postpartum anxiety or depression, and to make sure they are getting proper support to be able to care for the baby. The infant also needs regular doctor’s visits and recommended immunizations to support healthy development and ensure they are getting all the nutrients and support they need. The AAP also recommends breastfeeding or being fed with human milk for at least the first 6 months as it reduces the risk of infections that may precede SIDS. Pacifier use is also encouraged once breastfeeding and latch is established, or immediately if the infant is formula fed.”*

### **Slide 14: Healthy and Happy Caregivers:**

*Say, “As a caregiver it is important to be happy and taken care of so you can provide the best care for the infant. As a mother it is important to go to your checkups and check on your postpartum recovery. It is important to be honest with the provider about how you are feeling and things that are bothering you.”*

## FEEDBACK/ CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

### Slide 15: Safe Sleep Summary

To summarize our discussion on safe sleep for infants, some important topics to repeat are:

- Babies up to 6 months old should sleep in the same room with their parents in a crib, bassinet, or bedside sleepers—a three-sided crib that attaches to the parents’ bed—and always on a flat and firm surface.
- Babies should sleep alone in an empty crib. No blankets, stuffed animals or loveys, pillows, foam wedges or crib bumpers. In other words, the crib or bassinet should have only one thing inside—a sleeping baby!
- Babies should sleep on their backs. Research shows that this is the safest position for sleep. Foam positioners and wedges that claim to keep babies in “safer” positions are not recommended. Once babies are able to roll over on their own, you can allow them to choose their own sleep position—backs or bellies.
- Babies should always sleep in a smoke-free environment. Smoke in the house (or even on adults’ clothing) can cause irritation and breathing problems.
- Some research suggests breast milk during a baby’s first two months helps reduce the risk of SIDS.
- How much baby gear is enough?
  - You might choose a sleep sack— a zip-on blanket that will keep your baby warm without the danger of suffocation from a loose blanket.
  - A baby monitor can be helpful if your baby sleeps in a separate room.
  - The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends against the use of other devices that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS or other sleep-related deaths.

## LESSON EXTENSION (20-30 minutes)

### Slide 16: Safe Sleep Web Activity

This is an activity to help the participants understand and learn what a safe sleep environment is.

### Slide 17: Recalled Roulette

Will make a wheel of popular recalled items. Whichever picture/item it lands on has the participant explain why they think it was recalled. NOTE: You can also simply show pictures of recalled items.

*“The last activity that I have planned for you is Recalled Roulette. We will spin the wheel that has four products that you have probably heard of or even used. After the wheel stops on one, we will look at a picture of it and then individually think of ways that it could cause danger.”*

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