



## **Texas State Child Fatality Review Team Committee Position Statement: Safe Sleep for Infants**

The State Child Fatality Review Team Committee (SCFRT) works closely with local Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRT) to promote public awareness to reduce the number of preventable child deaths. One of the SCFRT recommendations to Child Protective Services in the 2007 Texas Child Fatality Review Team Annual Report focused on increased understanding of infant deaths in sleep environments. The SCFRT initiated a workgroup of active members to develop a position statement on infant and child safe sleep environments.

The SCFRT, as well as other state and national organizations, supports promoting safe sleep practices and safe sleep environments to reduce the number of preventable infant and child deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and those deaths classified as Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).

The SCFRT makes the following recommendations on sleep environments and practices as well as general health practices to help reduce the number of preventable infant and child deaths. These recommendations are made to reinforce researched best practices for safe sleep of infants. This position paper is intended as a support document for those working to reduce infant deaths and not as a general handout.

### **Recommended Healthy Practices for Parents**

It is recommended that:

- Pregnant women take care of themselves during pregnancy and receive early pre-natal care from a licensed doctor.
- Parents quit smoking during pregnancy and remain smoke-free after the birth of the child.
- Children receive regular well-child check-ups by a licensed doctor.
- Parents look for safety information on cribs, bassinets and other related items found in sleep environments, such as toys, bedding and blankets.
- Mothers breastfeed their infants up to one year of age if possible.

### **Recommended Sleep Position**

It is recommended that:

- Babies are placed on their backs to sleep for naps or at night.
- Babies are given time on the tummy while awake and supervised by a responsible older teen or adult.
- Parents tell relatives, friends and babysitters that the baby will be placed on his/her back to sleep.

### **Recommended Sleep Environment**

It is recommended that:

- Babies are placed to sleep in safety-approved crib or bassinet with a firm mattress, using a well-fitting sheet made for the crib or bassinet.
- Parents maintain the home and especially the baby's sleep area free of cigarette smoke.
- Babies are never placed to sleep on soft mattresses or cushions, such as on beds, sofas, chairs or waterbeds.
- Babies' sleep environment is free of toys or other soft bedding items, such as blankets or comforters, stuffed animals and bumper pads.
- Babies' sleep environment is free of unsafe items, such as plastic sheets, plastic bags, strings, cords or ropes.

Along with the above recommendations, parents often ask where in the home their baby should sleep. The SCFRT, as well as other state and national organizations, makes the following recommendation: The safest place for a baby to sleep is in the same room with a parent or caregiver but in a separate sleep surface, such as a safety-approved crib or bassinet. This allows parents to check on and bond with the baby and makes breastfeeding more convenient.

Parents, through their own choice, may decide to bed-share (sleep in the same bed) with their baby. If a parent chooses to bed-share, the SCFRT recommends the following in addition to the above recommendations on health practices, sleep position and sleep environment.

**Some situations are never safe for parents to sleep with babies.**

It is recommended that an adult never sleep with a baby if the adult is:

- a smoker
- on soft bedding, such as bean bag chairs, sofas, chairs or waterbeds
- under the influence of alcohol
- using drugs or taking medications that cause sleepiness
- sick
- unusually tired
- very upset or angry

If parents choose to sleep with babies in an adult bed, it is recommended that they make sure the mattress is firm and covered with a fitted sheet; that the mattress fits tightly against a headboard and is away from walls where a baby cannot be wedged; and that the baby cannot fall off the bed. If parents do not have a safe, adequate area for a baby to sleep, they should look for resources in their community that can help provide such items.

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Sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics:

A Child Care Provider's Guide to Safe Sleep, [www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSchildcaresafesleep.pdf](http://www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSchildcaresafesleep.pdf);

A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep, [www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSparentsafesleep.pdf](http://www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSparentsafesleep.pdf)

Center for Disease Control: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), [www.cdc.gov/SIDS/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/SIDS/index.htm)

First Candle: Important Safe Sleep Tips, [www.firstcandle.org/new\\_exp\\_parents/new\\_exp\\_safesleeptips.html](http://www.firstcandle.org/new_exp_parents/new_exp_safesleeptips.html)

Indiana Perinatal Network & Baby First: [www.nd.edu/~jmckenna1/lab/pamphlets/safesleepv2.pdf](http://www.nd.edu/~jmckenna1/lab/pamphlets/safesleepv2.pdf).

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Pub. No. 06-5759, January 2006.

UNICEF UK's Baby Friendly Initiative, with support of the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSIC):

[www.unicef.org.uk/press/news\\_detail.asp?news\\_id=178](http://www.unicef.org.uk/press/news_detail.asp?news_id=178).

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: Crib Safety Tips (in English and in Spanish)

[www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PUBS/5030.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PUBS/5030.pdf), [www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PREREL/prhtml01/01131s.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PREREL/prhtml01/01131s.pdf)

The SCFRT Position Paper on Safe Sleep is a product of the SCFRT Workgroup on Safe Sleep (Brian Castrucci, Gwen Gray, John Hellsten, Dr. Eric Levy, Laurie Lindsey, Donna Norris, Dr. Juan Parra and Dr. Elizabeth Peacock). The Position Paper on Safe Sleep will be reviewed annually and updated as new validated information indicates.

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