



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES 'SAFE SLEEP' SWAP TO HELP PREVENT INFANT FATALITIES; THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, ACS IS URGING NY'ERS TO DROP OFF NOW-BANNED CRIB BUMPERS IN EXCHANGE FOR SAFER WEARABLE SLEEP SACKS

Each Year, More Than 40 Babies in NYC Die From a Preventable Sleep-Related Injury; Throughout October's "Safe Sleep Awareness Month," ACS is Providing Parents With a Wearable Sleep Sack At ACS Sites Across the City

As part of October's "Safe Sleep Awareness Month," NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today announced a month-long "safe sleep swap" campaign to help prevent accidental, sleep-related infant deaths. Just over a month ago, New York State officially banned crib bumper pads from being sold at stores statewide because they could increase the risk of suffocation. Commissioner Hansell today announced that, throughout the month of October, parents and caregivers can dispose of their crib bumper pads at designated ACS sites across the City in exchange for a wearable safe sleep sack, which is safer for babies.

"New York State's crib bumper ban is a step in the right direction in helping to prevent future unsafe sleep tragedies among our youngest New Yorkers. In recognition of 'Safe Sleep Awareness Month,' we're urging parents to swap out their crib bumper pads-- which can pose a serious safety risk to infants-- in exchange for a wearable sleep sack at one of the designated ACS sites across the City. As always, parents should be reminded of the ABCs of Safe Sleep: infants should sleep alone, on their backs, and in a safety-approved crib," **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

"NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan and all of the facilities within the public hospital system are committed to providing parents with the support and education they need to keep newborns safe and healthy," **said NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan Chief Executive Officer Alina Moran.** "As the first hospital in Manhattan to be designated a Gold Safe Sleep Champion by Cribs for Kids®, we work closely with ACS to prevent sleep-related injuries and deaths through evidence-based practice, parent education, staff training, and community outreach."

"This year New York State took an important step to prevent sleep-related infant deaths by banning the sale of crib bumper pads, known to increase the risk of suffocation. During 'Safe Sleep Awareness Month', parents will have the opportunity to trade in their crib bumper pads for safety-approved crib products through the NYC Administration for Children's Services. I strongly encourage parents in District 34 and across the state to take advantage of this free service and ensure that your baby can rest safely and with ease," **said State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester).**

“I salute ACS’s ‘Safe Sleep’ Swap initiative that will run throughout Safe Sleep Awareness Month,” **said Assembly member Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale)**. “No parent, relative, or family friend would ever intentionally risk the injury or even death of a newborn, but that’s what some have tragically done by purchasing and using crib bumper pads. The state banned their sale, and now ACS is taking the next step to encourage parents and care givers to get rid of their existing crib bumper pads in favor of safe sleep sacks. It’s up to all of us to do what we can to keep our babies safe by ensuring their sleep safely.”

On average, more than 40 babies a year in New York City die from a sleep-related injury; this represents almost one death every week. According to New York State, 47 percent of infant deaths across the state are attributable to unsafe sleeping practices. A sleep-related injury death is the sudden death of an infant less than 1 year old that occurs because of where and/or how they were placed to sleep. Sleep-related infant injury death is not the same as SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) or “crib death.” SIDS is the natural death of a baby that cannot be explained after a careful medical review of the case. Unlike SIDS, sleep-related infant injury deaths involve accidents that can be explained and are mostly preventable.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has long warned against using crib bumper pads, saying that they do not serve any safety purpose and pose a serious suffocation hazard to children. Crib bumper pads are typically sold as part of crib bedding sets and are used to cover the slats of the crib.

Commissioner Hansell today commended Governor Cuomo and the New York State legislature for officially prohibiting the sale of crib bumper pads and the restriction of its use in certain settings, like child care facilities. The official ban goes into effect on October 12th.

In 2015, New York City took an important step in expanding and energizing its work to improve infant safe sleep practice among New York City residents by creating a dedicated Safe Sleep Team with outreach members focused in neighborhoods in high risk areas. In June 2018, ACS, the Department of Health, and NYC Health + Hospitals introduced the city’s first-ever ‘Safe Sleep Toolkit’, which is now provided to all new parents and caregivers at public hospitals across the city. The toolkit provides safe sleep resources such as a wearable blanket to keep the baby warm, an infant onesie, netting and educational materials about best practices for infant safe sleep. The toolkit includes a video to help debunk myths and misconceptions about sleep-related infant safety practices.

Commissioner Hansell pointed to the following ways in which families can create a safe sleep environment:

- Avoid bringing the baby into bed with you, even if you think it will keep the baby warmer.
- A baby must never sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or on a chair with anyone. Babies may suffocate if another person accidentally rolls on top of them or covers their nose and mouth.
- Keep soft objects, loose bedding, or any other items that could increase the risk of suffocation out of the baby’s sleep area. If parents are worried about their baby getting cold, dress them in a wearable blanket, such as a sleep sack, or in another layer of infant clothing.
- Place babies on their backs to sleep. Babies breathe better on their backs than on their stomachs or sides

- Put babies to bed in a flat, firm sleep surface with a fitted sheet made for that specific product. Though it might seem more comfortable to put a pillow on top of the mattress, babies may suffocate on the soft surface.

Those interested in dropping off their crib bumper pads in exchange for a wearable sleep sack can visit any one of the following ACS sites:

Bronx

- 2501 Grand Concourse, 4th FL.

Brooklyn

- 1274 Bedford Ave., 1st FL.

Manhattan

- 55 W. 125th Street

Staten Island

- 350 Saint Marks Place, 5th FL.

Queens

- 92-31 Union Hall Street, 3rd Fl

For more information on infant safe sleep best practices or resources in your community, visit: www.nyc.gov/safesleep or call 311 and ask for Safe Sleep.