



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AS PART OF 'SAFE SLEEP AWARENESS MONTH', NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES REMINDS PARENTS TO PRACTICE THE ABC'S OF SLEEP; BABIES SHOULD SLEEP ALONE, ON THEIR BACKS & IN A SAFETY-APPROVED CRIB TO PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES

An Average of 41 Babies in New York City Die Each Year from Suffocation & Other Preventable Sleep-Related Injuries; ACS Continues to Spread Awareness Among NYC Families

NEW YORK, NY – As part of October's "Safe Sleep Awareness Month," Commissioner David A. Hansell, of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), reminded New York City parents and caregivers of infants under the age of 1 year old to practice the ABCs of sleep in order to prevent future tragedies. Babies should sleep **A**lone, on their **B**acks and in a safety-approved **C**rib when sleeping at night or even when taking a nap. More information on the importance of practicing safe sleep can be [found here](#).

Tragically, in New York City, 40 or more babies die each year (almost one baby each week) from suffocation and other preventable sleep-related injuries. 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.

ACS has been collaborating with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and NYC Health and Hospitals (H+H) to ensure New Yorkers understand how to keep their babies safe when they are sleeping.

"Infant deaths related to unsafe sleep practices are preventable, and ACS is committed to educating families and caretakers about practices that can help keep babies safe," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "Especially as the weather gets colder, and parents are more tempted to wrap their babies in blankets, it's important that families practice the ABCs of sleep: babies should sleep alone, on their backs and in a safety-approved crib."

"As most sleep-related infant injuries are preventable, it is critical for all families in New York City to have the information and resources they need to put their babies to sleep safely," **said Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. "I thank the Administration for Children Services for these life-saving efforts which will protect families and our littlest New Yorkers."

"We are proud to collaborate with ACS and DOHMH to continue to raise awareness to reduce preventable sleep-related infant fatalities in New York City," **said NYC Health + Hospitals Chief Medical Officer Mabelle Allen, MD**. "Safe Sleep Awareness Month allows us to further

empower families, and ensure equitable access to life-saving information and resources to promote safer practices and reduce infant injury. Families should rest easy knowing their newborns are sleeping more safely.”

Key ways in which families can create a safe sleep environment for their babies:

- 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.

Over the years, ACS has engaged in important campaigns to help increase awareness about safe sleep practices. In 2015, the 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 at ACS with outreach members focused in neighborhoods in high risk areas.

This month, in recognition of Safe Sleep Awareness Month, ACS will be hosting a 4-week virtual summit focused on how to protect babies from sleep-related injury deaths. The theme of the summit is: “Closing the Gap: An Intersectional Approach to Reducing Infant Mortality.” Virtual events will take place every Tuesday in October from 10:30am to 12pm. For a calendar of events, or to register for the summit, [click here](#).

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

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