



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IN RECOGNITION OF “SAFE SLEEP AWARENESS MONTH,” NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES REMINDS FAMILIES THAT INFANTS SHOULD SLEEP ALONE, ON THEIR BACKS & IN A SAFETY-APPROVED CRIB IN ORDER TO PREVENT INJURY OR DEATH

Earlier This Year, ACS Created a New “Office of Child Safety & Injury Prevention” Dedicated to Preventing Accidents Involving Children, Including Those Related to Unsafe Sleep

NEW YORK, NY – As part of October’s “Safe Sleep Awareness Month”, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) is reminding parents and caregivers of infants under the age of 1 year old to practice the ABCs of sleep in order to prevent injury or death. 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. Earlier this year, ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell created a brand new “Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention,” dedicated entirely to education, information and outreach to prevent accidents and injuries among children, including those related to unsafe sleep practices. Throughout the month of October, the office will be working closely with families and communities on the importance of practicing safe sleep. For instance, ACS will be distributing safe sleep resources and educational materials to families. ACS will also be offering crib demonstrations that simulate a safe sleeping environment and highlight the risks associated with stomach/side sleeping and the use of excess bedding, like quilts, blankets and comforters.

“Infant deaths related to unsafe sleep practices are preventable and, as part of our newly created Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention, ACS will continue to educate families and caretakers about practices that can help keep babies safe,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “In recognition of Safe Sleep Awareness Month, we are reminding families to practice the ABCs of sleep: babies should sleep alone, on their backs and in a safety-approved crib.”

“Safe-sleep practices are life-saving for all infants, and families need to be aware of what is putting their babies at risk,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “I thank ACS for their commitment to helping families keep our tiniest New Yorkers safe and healthy.”

“Of all the things a new parent often worries about, a sleep-related injury death doesn’t have to be one of them and, luckily, it can be completely prevented by following a few simple steps to create a safe sleep environment for newborns,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Mabelle Allen, MD**. “We’re fortunate to work with our partners at ACS to ensure new parents have the awareness and information they need to prevent such tragic deaths.”

Tragically, in New York City, 40 or more babies die each year 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.

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. 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.
- 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.
- 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. In 2021, Commissioner Hansell announced the creation of a new “Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention,” which supports ongoing child safety campaigns, including those related to unsafe sleep practices.

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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