



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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WITH FRIGID WEATHER ON ITS WAY TO NYC, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFFERS LIFESAVING TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP INFANTS SAFE FROM DANGEROUSLY COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS & WILL DISTRIBUTE 'WEARABLE BABY BLANKETS' TO FAMILIES AHEAD OF THE STORM

Ahead of Major Freeze This Weekend, ACS Reminds Parents That, Even In Cold Weather Conditions, Infants Should NOT Sleep With Blankets or In Beds

NEW YORK, NY – Ahead of dangerously cold weather conditions, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell reminded parents with infants that, even as the temperatures drop, it's dangerous for babies less than a year old to sleep with parents or siblings in adult beds, or to sleep with blankets or quilts. These sleep practices create a risk of suffocation. Instead, to keep babies warm, Commissioner Hansell urged parents to dress babies in an extra layer of infant clothing or in a wearable blanket. Ahead of the storm, ACS will provide free wearable blankets to families at each of its 16 locations across the city.

"With frigid weather on the way, parents with infants need to know how they can put their babies to sleep in a way that will keep them both safe and warm. The truth is: what's safe for adults in cold temperatures – quilts, comforters and cozy beds – is NOT safe for babies. Instead, to keep babies warm, parents should dress their infants in an extra layer of clothing or in a wearable blanket, which can be picked up for free at any of our 16 locations across the City," **said ACS Commissioner David. A Hansell.**

Every year, about 50 babies in New York City die from a sleep-related injury; almost one baby 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.

ACS Commissioner Hansell today reminded parents of the ABCs of Safe Sleep. Infants should sleep **A**lone, on their **B**acks, in a safety-approved **C**rib. He urged all parents to do five things during the cold snap in the days ahead:

1. 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.

2. Keep soft objects, loose bedding, or any other items that could increase the risk of suffocation out of the baby's sleep area.
3. 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.
4. Place babies on their backs to sleep. Babies breathe better on their backs than on their stomachs or sides
5. 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

"Infant deaths from unsafe sleep are preventable deaths. All parents and caregivers should follow the ABCs of safe sleep: babies are safest when they sleep Alone, on their Backs, in a safety-approved Crib," acting **OCFS Commissioner Sheila Poole** said. "Following these simple rules can prevent heartache that no parent should ever have to endure. Babies belong in a crib or bassinet in the room, but not in bed with a parent, caregiver, sibling or pet."

"Sleep-related deaths in infants are easily preventable by adhering to the safe sleep methods, as presented today by the NYC Administration for Children's Services," said **Bill Baccaglini, President and CEO of The New York Foundling**, where today's announcement was made. "With a frigid weekend upon us, I urge parents and caregivers to pick up a wearable blanket that allows babies to sleep safely and warmly. And, of course, we welcome families in need of extra and support and services to visit and learn our Crisis Nursery, a 24/7 haven for parents and children."

If you have poor heating in your apartment and your landlord does not address the heating issue, call 311 for help.

The ACS Safe Sleep Initiative is part of a larger effort in New York State to help prevent infant deaths. In 2017, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) provided over 5,000 safe sleep kits designed to educate parents and caregivers on safe sleeping practices as well as nearly 1,500 Pack 'n' Plays. Just this week, Governor Cuomo announced in his "State of the State Address" that he will direct DOH and OCFS to launch a new joint initiative to further reduce preventive infant deaths, including the launch of a new public awareness campaign and expanded outreach to medical providers. As part of this proposal, OCFS and DOH will expand the distribution of safe sleep kits to nearly 10,000 families and target regions where unsafe sleep practices may be more prevalent.

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' for 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. View the full video here: [Breath of Life](#). Toolkits will be distributed at H+H delivering hospitals beginning February 1, 2019.

If you are in need of a free wearable blanket for your baby, visit one of the following ACS locations:

Manhattan

- 492 1st Avenue (this location is open after 4pm on weeknights and all day/night on weekends)
- 150 William Street, 4th Fl.
- 55 W. 125th Street, 12th Fl.

Bronx

- 2501 Grand Concourse, 4th Fl.
- 1200 Waters Place
- 974 Morris Park Avenue

Brooklyn

- 1274 Bedford Ave, 1st Fl.
- 185 Marcy Avenue, 2nd Fl.
- 404 Pine Street, 4th Fl.
- 2554 Linden Boulevard, 1st Fl.
- 345 Adams Street, 9th Fl.
- 19 Grant Square

Queens

- 165-15 Archer Avenue, 1st Fl.
- 90-25 161st Street, 3rd Fl.
- 92-31 Union Hall Street, 3rd Fl.

Staten Island

- 350 Saint Marks Place, 5th 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.

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