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IN RECOGNITION OF “SAFE SLEEP AWARENESS MONTH,” NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES REMINDS FAMILIES THAT THEY CAN KEEP THEIR INFANTS SAFE BY PUTTING THEM TO SLEEP ALONE, ON THEIR BACKS, & IN SAFETY-APPROVED CRIBS

Caregivers Should Always Make Sure Cribs Are Free of Blankets, Pillows & Toys

New York, NY - As part of national “Safe Sleep Awareness Month” this October, 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 ABC’s of sleep in order to keep their babies safe and prevent injury or death. It is safest for babies to always sleep **A**lone, on their **B**acks, and in a safety-approved **C**rib, whether sleeping at night or taking a nap.

ACS recently created an Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention, which is dedicated to preventing unintentional child injuries, including those related to unsafe sleep practices. Throughout the month of October, the Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention will be hosting community resource fairs for families that will include safe crib demonstrations and distribution of educational materials and resources to support infant caregivers in creating a safe sleeping environment for babies. .

“When it comes to putting babies to sleep safely, less is more. In recognition of Safe Sleep Awareness Month, ACS is reminding families that cribs should be free of pillows, blankets and toys, which can put sleeping babies at greater risk of suffocation and strangulation. We also know from the experts that it is safest for babies to sleep on their backs and in a safety-approved crib. Parenting is hard and exhausting – I know firsthand – but bringing a baby into bed can have catastrophic consequences that we don’t want any parent to face. We encourage parents to share the room but not the bed. Throughout the month, ACS will be participating in community resource fairs to engage with families about these important safety practices, and we will continue to find new ways to get this life-saving message across to new parents and caregivers,” **said ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser.**

“The ‘Safe Sleep’ campaign is just one of the ways in which New York City is working upstream in making sure families have easy access to the information and resources they need to keep their little ones safe. I want to thank the Administration for Children’s Services for helping to get this important message across not only during Safe Sleep Awareness Month but throughout the year!” **said Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom.**

“As a father of three, I know how difficult it can be to get babies to sleep,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. “But a safe night’s sleep is most important and we want to make it easy for parents to follow the ABCs of bedtime. The Health Department is proud to offer many resources for new families, including cribs, and we applaud ACS for its work to promote safety for infants.”

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 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 careful medical review of the case. Unlike SIDS, sleep-related infant injury deaths are 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.

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.