

Safe Infant Sleeping Practices in Child Care

- 1. Place all infants (birth through 12 months) completely flat on their backs on a firm, tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib or playpen.**
 - ALWAYS place an infant flat on her back for sleep in a crib or playpen, unless it is ordered by a health care provider to do otherwise. It is required to obtain a **written order from the health care provider specifying the medical reason and specific time frame to follow order, along with written parental permission, to keep in the infant's file.** Review it with parents periodically. It is also recommended to consult an attorney to discuss the liability risk for you or the child care program. Regardless if you obtain written orders from the health care provider and the parents, you are not required to enroll the infant and follow the alternative sleep position/sleeping surface if you feel uncomfortable.
 - ALWAYS put an infant on her back each time you lay her down for sleep; however, if the infant is mobile and rolls over on her own, the baby can sleep in the position she chooses. You do not need to return her to a back sleeping position.
 - Waterbeds, couches, soft mattresses, pillows, beanbags, and other soft surfaces should not be used as infant sleeping surfaces.
 - If a playpen is used, do not add any extra mattresses, cushions, or soft bedding. Use only the mattress or pad provided by the manufacturer of the playpen. It is recommended to use the Velcro straps provided by the manufacturer to secure the pad in place.
- 2. Only allow infants to sleep in a crib or playpen approved by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Check www.cpsc.gov for recalls.**
 - Keep hardware tightened.
 - Keep drop-side of crib locked in the highest up-right position at all times.
 - Keep mattress in the lowest position.
 - Do not attach anything to the crib or playpen, such as a mobile or crib toy.
 - Bassinets are not recommended to use in child care.
- 3. Do not allow infants to sleep in car seats, swings, and bouncy chairs. Require parents to remove their infant from the car seat when they arrive to child care.**
 - When infants sleep in car seats, bouncy chairs, swings, etc., the downward bending of the neck and head compress the airway, thus decreasing the amount of air the infant is able to breathe in.
 - Infants sleeping in car seats, swings, or bouncy chairs, also raise a safety concern because the infants are not well protected from the other children's activity in these devices.
 - The August 2010 issue of Pediatrics highlighted the results of a study of fall injuries of infants from car seats used outside the car. Of these injuries, 64.8% fell out of a car seat; 14.6 % of injuries were caused by a car seat falling from an elevated surface; 5.6% occurred from other types of falls.
 - Sleeping in positional devices contribute to positional skull deformities in infants.
 - Keeping infants in positional devices delays proper development – infants need to be on the floor to work on their physical development, they need to interact with other children for their social development, and they need to be held for their emotional development.
- 4. Place crib or playpen in a safe location.**
 - Away from stairs, windows (blinds), outlets, heaters, etc.

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- Keep everything out of reach (ex. monitor cords, pictures, etc.).
 - Do not hang anything heavy on the wall around the crib or playpen.
5. **Encourage tummy time when infant is awake and supervised.**
 - This strengthens neck and shoulder muscles, encourages rolling over and crawling.
 6. **Remove pillows, heavy blankets, fluffy comforters, sheepskins, bumper pads, stuffed toys, and other soft items from the crib.**
 7. **Only use properly fitting **FITTED** crib or playpen sheets to cover the mattress or pad. Do not use flat sheets, blankets, or fitted sheets that are the wrong size.**
 8. **If using a blanket, place the infant with her feet at the foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest. Make sure the infant's arms are not tucked under the blanket.**
 9. **Make sure the infant's head remains uncovered during sleep.**
 10. **Don't let the infant get too warm during sleep.**
 - Don't over-layer the infant with clothing or blankets.
 - Keep the room temperature at 68-72 degrees Fahrenheit (F).
 11. **Consider offering a pacifier (with parent's permission) when placing an infant down for sleep. Once infant falls asleep and it falls out, it does not have to be reinserted. Always inspect pacifier for tears. Pacifiers should not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped to an infant's clothing.**
 12. **Remove bibs, necklaces, hooded sweatshirts, and hats before laying infant down for sleeping.**
 13. **Do not let babies sleep or play in a room where smoking is allowed at **any time**.**
 14. **Closely monitor infants while they are sleeping by listening (infant monitor recommended) and directly observing them (frequent visual checks at least every 10-15 minutes).**
 15. **Do not allow infants to share a crib, even if they are siblings or twins. Co-sleeping is also not recommended.**
 16. **Know and practice CPR.**
 17. **Never use positioning devices, as well as rolled up blankets, unless ordered by a health care provider.**
 - As of September 2010, the CPSC and FDA warn against the use of positioning devices.
 - Require a written order from a health care provider stating medical reason for use and length of time to use positioning device, as well as written parental permission.
 18. **If parents request that their infant be swaddled, only one thin blanket should be used and it should not come any higher than to the infant's shoulders.**
 19. **Encourage regular check-ups and immunizations. Support breastfeeding.**
 20. **Set a policy on infant sleep position.**
 - Put your policy in writing and give a copy to parents.
 - Inform all staff, including substitutes and volunteers, of your policy on the first day of employment/volunteering.

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Eastern North Dakota 800-941-7003 or 218-299-7026 ~ Western North Dakota 888-223-1510 or 701-223-1510

www.ndchildcare.org