



safe **sleep** heroes

toolkit for families &
communities

**First Year
Cleveland**



You can be a hero.

Nearly everyone knows or will know a baby. And at some point, nearly everyone will influence the way a baby is put to sleep for a nap or for the night. Parents and people who support parents can breathe easy—and so can babies—when Safe Sleep is as simple as **ABCD**.

Every year we lose too many babies to preventable, sleep-related deaths in the Cleveland area; **it is the equivalent of a kindergarten classroom of healthy children**. It's important to remember these deaths are *preventable*. They don't have to happen and we know how to keep our babies safe. It's up to us to do it.

ABCD. Know it, do it, share it.



Safe sleep is easy as **ABCD**

A. **A**lone

- **Nothing and no one else in the sleep space**
- No toys or stuffed animals
- Baby should never sleep with parents, siblings, pets or anyone else

B. **B**ack

- **Baby should be placed to sleep on their back**
- A baby is actually at less risk for choking on their back than when on their stomach
- Babies breathe easier when they are on their backs

C. **C**rib

- **Baby should be in a naked crib with only a fitted sheet**
- Never use other bedding or soft items like bumpers, sleep wedges, pillows, or blankets

D. **D**on't smoke

- **Secondhand smoke increases the risk of sleep-related death**
- Never smoke in a baby's environment, even when they are awake!



Mythbusting

There are so many myths about Safe Sleep that can make it hard to know what is best for your baby. We did a little myth-busting to help families know how to keep their babies safest.

Alone



Myths

- Won't the baby be cold?
- Without bumpers, the baby will get stuck in between the crib slats.
- I used bumpers/blankets/pillows/toys.
- The baby will be lonely!

Safe Sleep recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) include ideal sleeping environment temperatures for babies. Overheating contributes to preventable sleep related death in infants; a baby in a sleeper will be warm enough in a room that feels comfortable to an adult. If you are concerned that the baby will be too chilly, you can add a sleep sack or wearable blanket that is secure and safe for sleeping.

There are no recent reports of serious injuries to infants from the bars or slats on a crib. Be sure that the space between crib bars is no more than a standard soda can.

Bumpers, blankets, and pillows are a very serious suffocation hazard for infants.

Even older infants and toddlers can be injured by bumpers, including using them to climb out of a crib.

While Safe Sleep means using a different sleep surface, it does not mean that you have to sleep far away from your baby! A crib, bassinet, or Pack and Play can be set-up in a parent's room. In fact, the AAP recommends room-sharing with your baby for at least the first six months to one year.

Back

Myths

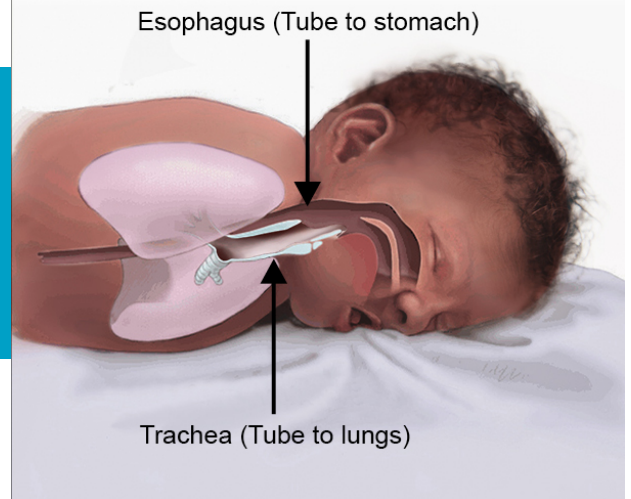
- Babies sleep better on their tummies.
- Babies choke on their backs.

Sometimes babies may sleep deeper on their tummies, but that is part of the problem. Babies sleep so deeply that when their airway becomes blocked, they do not wake up. For some babies, it can dull their startle reflex, which may be linked to preventable, sleep-related death. It is also important to remember that babies who are used to sleeping on their backs may have a hard time breathing if they are sleeping on their tummies, but do not yet have the strength to roll over.

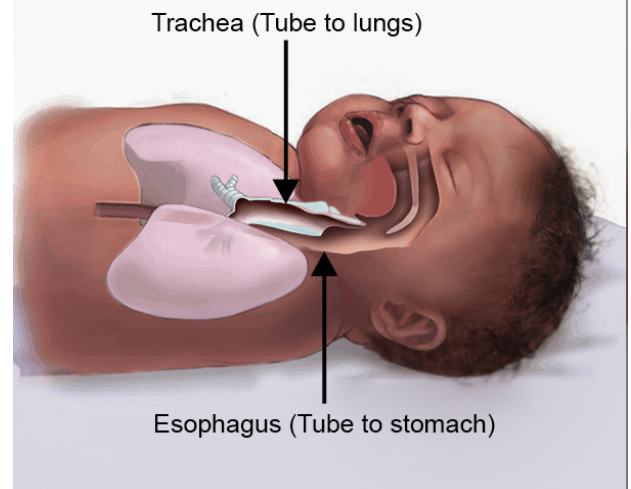
While doctors used to tell parents to put a baby on their side, recommendations have changed because we have better information today.

It's okay if baby rolls on his/her tummy as long as they're not swaddled. But your baby should move into that position on their own *and still be placed in their sleep space on their back*. Tummy time is important—but it should be while your baby is awake and alert. Talk to your baby's pediatrician about tummy time and what is right for your baby.

Baby in the stomach sleeping position



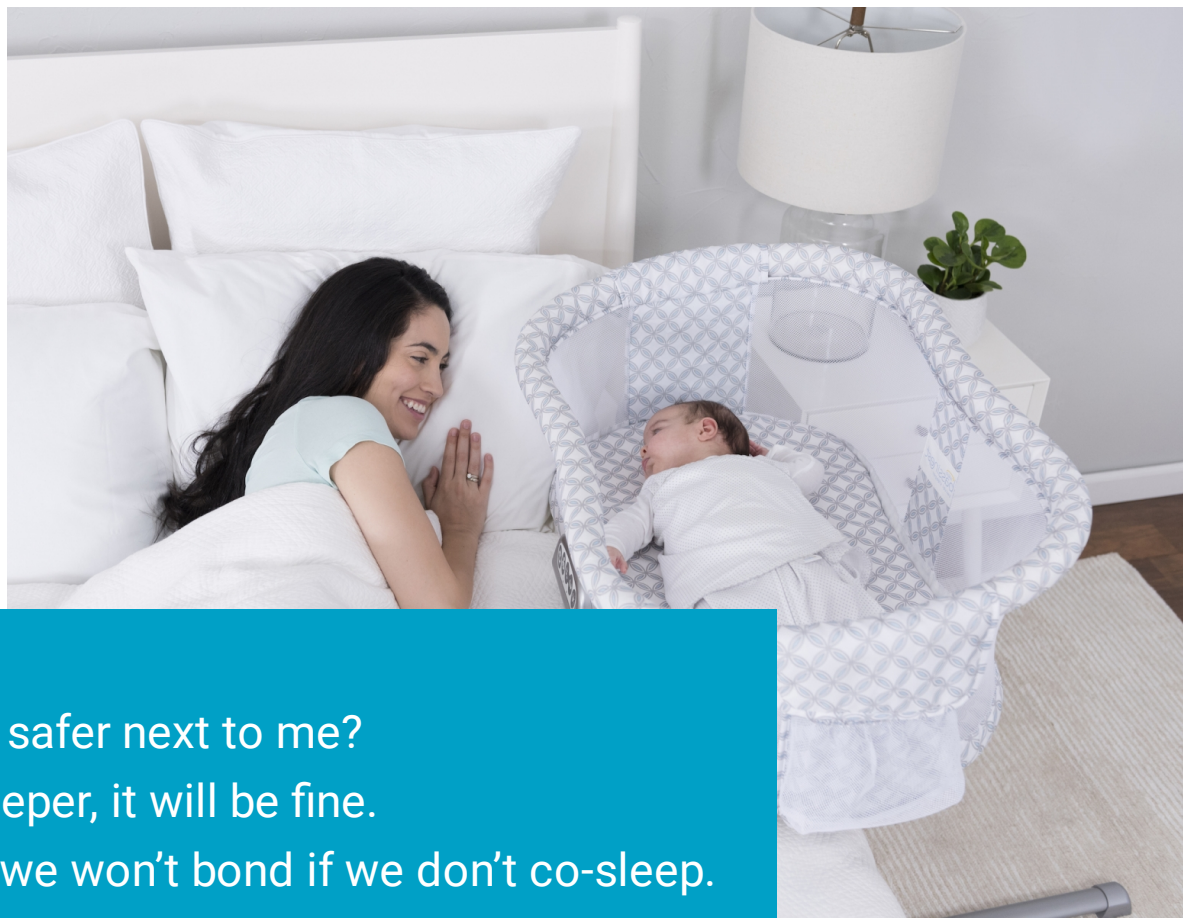
Baby in the back sleeping position



Because of the way a baby's reflexes and anatomy work together, the back is the safest position to keep from choking while asleep. Please see our diagram to find out why.

We know that babies are less likely to choke if they are on their back.

Crib



Myths

- Isn't my baby safer next to me?
- I'm a light sleeper, it will be fine.
- I am worried we won't bond if we don't co-sleep.
- I put my other babies in bed with me, and they were fine.

Even if you have successfully bed-shared with other children, it is risky to do so. Light sleepers have rolled onto their babies and not woken up. The average person moves more than a dozen times a night, and that can be onto your baby.

Just like every sleep is an opportunity, it can also be a risk. Suffocation is silent, and when you are asleep there are no guarantees.

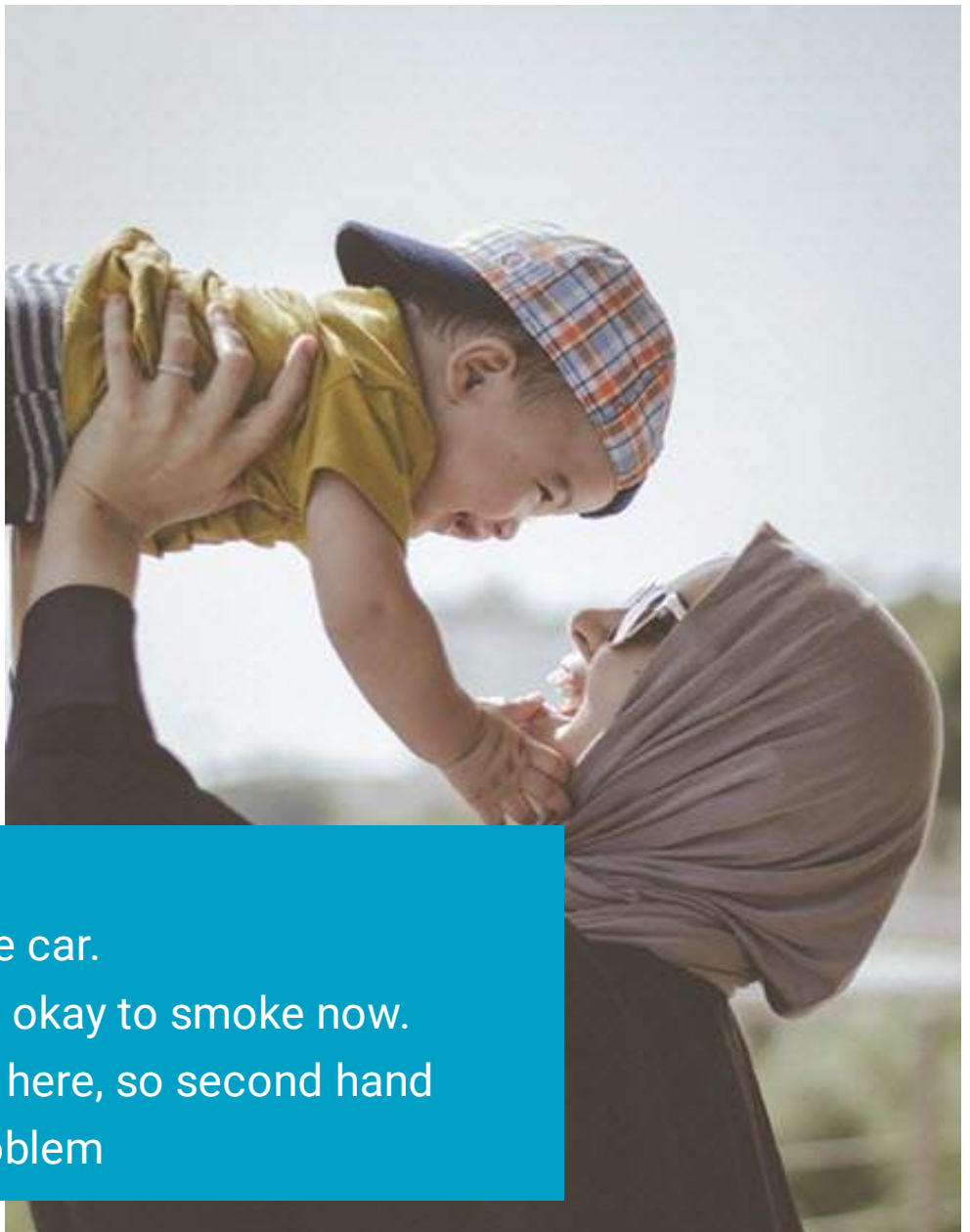
Your baby is worth making sure that every sleep is a safe sleep.

If you are concerned about safety or bonding, put the baby's sleep surface—a crib, bassinet, Pack and Play, cribette, or baby box—next to (but not on) the parent's bed.

Avoid any gaps, drapery, cords, mobiles, balloons, or other decorations that could fall into the baby's sleep space or be grabbed by a curious baby.

Baby-wearing, reading to your baby, bath time, feeding, and so many other activities are excellent for bonding, and they do not carry the risk of co-sleeping.

Don't Smoke



Myths

- It's safe to smoke in the car.
- I'm not pregnant, so it's okay to smoke now.
- The baby doesn't sleep here, so second hand smoke will not be a problem

There can be no argument that second-hand smoke is dangerous for babies. But did you know that third-hand smoke or smoke residue on someone's hands, clothes, or in the sleep environment is linked to preventable, sleep-related death in infants?

If you can smell smoke on someone or something, it can be dangerous for your baby.

We know that pregnant women should not smoke, but no one should smoke around a baby or in the baby's environment.

Creating a Safe Sleep Environment



Crib Safety

- No drop sides, no gaps between the mattress and crib, no broken/loose parts.
- Sleep positioners (such as wedges) are not recommended.
- Be sure there is no loose bedding, toys, or any other items in baby's crib, or that could potentially fall into the crib.
- The only thing in the crib should be a fitted sheet and baby.
- Keep pets away from baby's sleeping area.
- If you have multiples, such as twins or triplets, each should use their own sleep surface.

Baby Gear

- If your baby falls asleep in baby gear (such as a swing, seat, carseat, or stroller), move him or her onto a sleep surface. The devices are not meant for long periods of sleep or regular sleeping.

Feeding Baby in Bed

- Be sure to place her on her back on her own separate surface once feeding is finished and if you are tired, do not feed the baby on a soft surface, such as a couch or chair. Babies can become wedged and suffocate in the gaps around cushions of a couch or chair, or on the person feeding him or her. A couch or chair can be one of the most dangerous places to fall asleep with your baby.

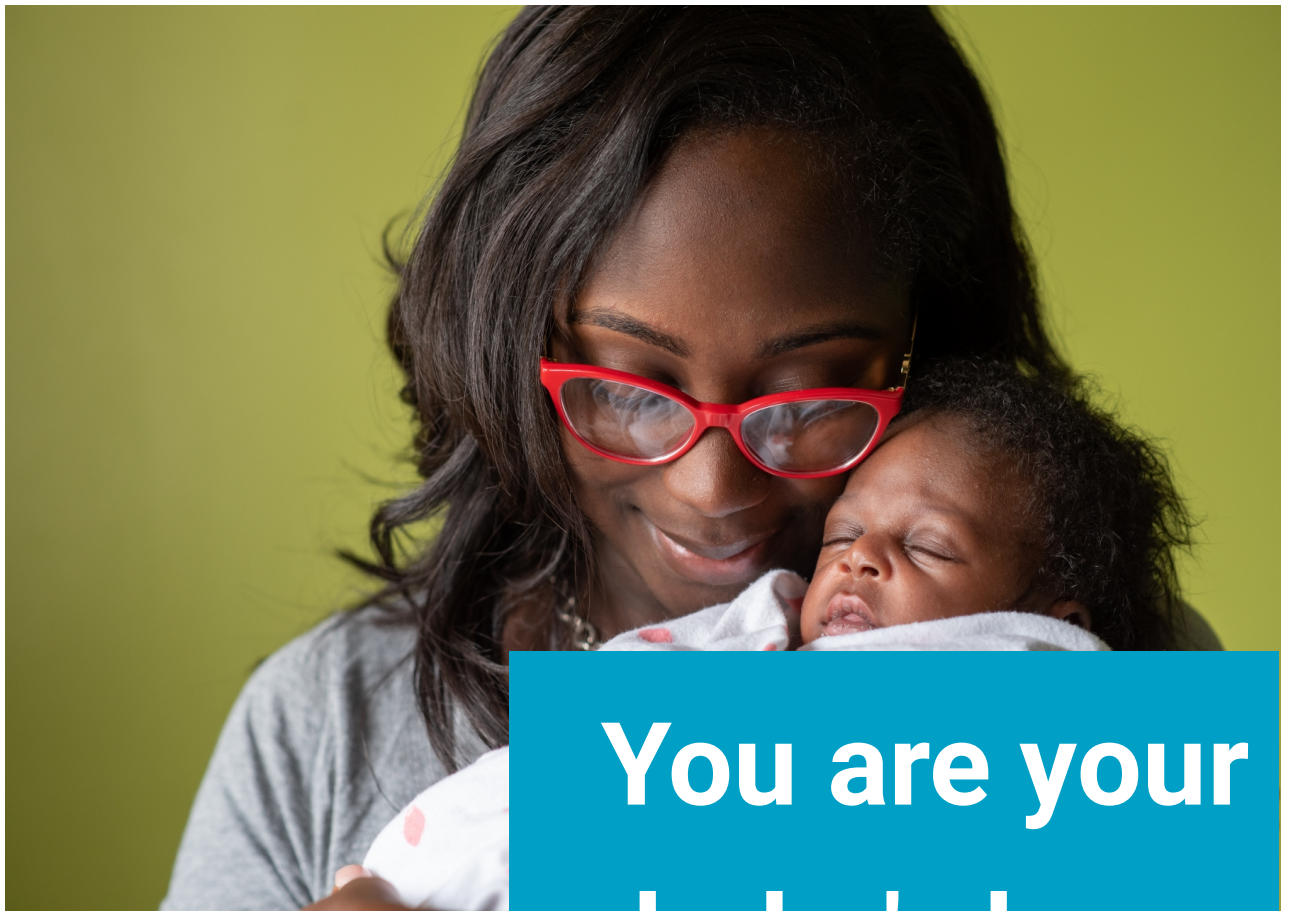
Other Tips

- Babies should not sleep with siblings, even toddlers, as the other child or may accidentally roll onto or reposition the baby.
- Mobiles should be removed from a sleeping area once a baby is rolling over. Try using them in a changing area or consider skipping altogether.
- Remember to share the room, not the bed!



Safe Sleep Conversation Guide for Parents

You are your baby's first and best advocate. Here are some tips for having conversations about safe sleep.



You are your baby's hero.

Having a conversation with a loved one about Safe Sleep can be hard. No one wants to give the impression that they are judging someone else's parenting, even if that parenting happened decades ago. While the recommendations for Safe Sleep have changed, the love of family and community members for babies has not changed.

Our conversation guide gives you some tools to start difficult conversations. If you need a boost in confidence, look at our Mythbusting guide and fact sheet for more information about Safe Sleep.

Talk to Loved Ones

- Grandparents
- Partners and co-parents
- Siblings
- Babysitters and child-care providers

Talk to grandparents.

Let grandparents know that you appreciate their help with your baby. Tell them that there is an easy way to remember how to safely sleep (ABCD), and emphasize that just like a car seat, this is another way to keep their grandbaby safer.

Talk to your partner or co-parent.

Of course, parents feel strongly about doing what is best for their baby and keeping their baby as safe as possible. Make sure you're on the same page, and pledge to be a support to one another.

It's normal to be tired when you've got a new baby, and it's hard to be at your best sometimes. Check out some of our resources for soothing your baby when it is hard to get them to sleep.

Talk to siblings.

Some siblings babysit or mind their younger siblings. Let them know what the safest way is to put a baby to sleep, and what your expectations are for their baby sibling. Talk to school-age and even younger children about making sure they do not put toys, blankets, or pillows in the baby's sleep space. Let young children know that they cannot climb into the baby's sleep space.

Teaching older siblings about ABCDs of Safe Sleep might also give you another set of eyes to remind a babysitter or caregiver about Safe Sleep.

Talk to babysitters or anyone else who might put your baby to sleep for a nap or at night.

Let babysitters know that you expect them to put the baby to sleep Alone, on their Back, and in a Crib every time. Emphasize that you Do not allow smoking around the baby or in the baby's environment. If your babysitter is a smoker, let them know they need to have clean hands and a clean shirt on around your baby.



Conversation Guide for Family & Friends

You don't have to be the parent of a new baby to care about Safe Sleep. Here are some tips for having conversations about Safe Sleep and being a Safe Sleep Hero.



Be a hero.

Having a conversation with a loved one about Safe Sleep can be hard--especially if you are talking about a baby who is not yours. No one wants to give the impression that they are judging someone else's parenting, even if that parenting happened decades ago. While the recommendations for Safe Sleep have changed, the love of family and community members for babies has not changed.

Our conversation guide gives you some tools to start difficult conversations. If you need a boost in confidence, look at our Mythbusting guide and fact sheet for more information about Safe Sleep.

Talk to Loved Ones

- Grandparents
- Parents and soon-to-be parents
- Siblings
- Babysitters and child-care providers

Talk to grandparents.

There is nothing like a grandparent's bond with their grandchild. Safe Sleep is an important tool for keeping your newest family members safe! There is an easy way to remember how to safely sleep (ABCD), and emphasize that just like a car seat, this is another way to keep their grandbaby safer.

Talk to soon-to-be parents or parents of infants.

Of course, parents feel strongly about doing what is best for their baby and keeping their baby as safe as possible. Supporting new parents is one of the most important parts of being a Safe Sleep Hero! Tell parents about Safe Sleep and, if possible, offer to keep an eye on the baby while they get some sleep!

If you know expecting parents, a baby registry or shower are a great time to bring up Safe Sleep!

Talk to siblings.

Some siblings babysit or mind their younger siblings. Let them know what the safest way is to put a baby to sleep, and what your expectations are for their baby sibling. Talk to school-age and even younger children about making sure they do not put toys, blankets, or pillows in the baby's sleep space. Let young children know that they cannot climb into the baby's sleep space.

Teaching older siblings about ABCDs of Safe Sleep might also be another set of eyes looking out for their newest sibling.

Talk to babysitters or anyone else who might put a baby to sleep for a nap or at night.

Remind others not to smoke around babies or in their environments.

Talking about Safe Sleep with anyone who might be putting a baby to sleep can be an excellent reminder for them!

Conversation Starters

- “Every nap and night time is an opportunity!”
- “Did you know you can reduce the risk of SIDS by using the ABCDs?”
- “I see you’re setting up the crib (or bassinet, Pack and Play, etc.) Have you heard about the ABCDs of Safe Sleep?”
- “I know it is hard, but your baby is worth it.”
- “Being a parent is full of worries, but here is something that might make it easier. Just remember ABCD!”
- “I heard a catchy way to remember Safe Sleep for babies—ABCD!”
- “These sleep sacks are so cute. Did you know they’re part of Safe Sleep recommendations?”
- “Safe sleep can be hard, but I know where you can find some tools!”



Starting a conversation is a brave act.

Thank you for making change happen and being a Safe Sleep Hero!

Remember, every sleep is an opportunity. And when you know better, you can do better.



RO DE ASFIXIA
se han asfixiado.
as entre el acolchado adicional y el
sés, y • En ropa de cama blanda.
E el edichón proporcionado por
ción adicional como acolchado.

Childcare Checklist

It can be nerve-racking to let someone else care for your child, no matter how much experience they have. One way to empower yourself and be your baby's best advocate is to discuss Safe Sleep with any childcare providers, daycare staff, or babysitter.

Safe Sleep Questions for Other Caregivers

Ask to see the sleep environment.

- How frequently is bedding changed?
- Are you required to provide any bedding?
- If the childcare center provides the bedding, does it appear tight fitting?
- Are there gaps around the mattress?
- Are there any stuffed animals, a crib mobile, drapery cords, pillows, or bumper pads?
- If the sleep environment is a Pack and Play, bassinet, or cribette, are all the sides intact and free from tears and rips?
- Does the area feel stuffy, overly warm, or drafty?

Ask the childcare provider, daycare staff, or babysitter what their policy is for putting babies to sleep.

- Is there a written policy?
- Does staff get any training in safe sleep?
- Can they affirm that there will only be one infant in each sleep space?
- How frequently will they check on a sleeping infant?



- Can they affirm that they will not put baby to sleep with a toy, pillow, or blanket?
- Can they affirm that nothing will be used to prop a baby in any position or to prop a bottle in the baby's sleep space?
- Can they affirm that any and all pacifiers will be free of clips, stuffed animals, and any other potential hazards?
- Can they affirm that your baby will be put to sleep on his or her back every time they go to sleep?

Soothing Your Baby

Let face it, sometimes getting a baby to sleep is rough. It can be very tempting to put the baby to sleep on their tummy or bring them into Mom and Dad's bed—especially in those early days when no one is getting much sleep. But while it can be hard, it is not impossible. Here are some links to resources that may help you learn to soothe your baby.




- [5 S' Method, with a video from Dr. Kristen Bruno of Children's Hospital of St. Louis](#)
- [Sleep During Baby's First Year from Cleveland Clinic](#)
- [Sleep Struggle Resources from Zero to Three](#)
- [Crying and Your Baby: How to Calm a Fussy or Colicky Baby, from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Getting Your Baby to Sleep from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Responding to Your Baby's Cries, by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Sleep Tips for Older Babies \(8-12 months\) from KidsHealth.org.](#)

Always talk to your pediatrician if you think that your baby may have a sleep issue that needs to be addressed. Safe Sleep is not always easy, but it is always worth it!

Created by First Year Cleveland Action Team Ten: Safe Sleep Heroes and The MetroHealth System, 2018.

Images: Cover, pages 7, 9, 10 and 13, National Institute for Children's Health Quality; pages 2, 8, 16 and back cover, ; pages 3, 4 and 5, Ohio Department of Health; pages 11, 14, 17, 18 and 19, Kamron Kahn for C7 Branding;



The Safe Sleep Toolkit is provided for education and informational purposes only and does not constitute providing medical advice or professional services. The information is provided on an “as-is” basis and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health condition. Individuals seeking medical advice should establish a patient-provider relationship with a licensed health care provider and follow up with that particular provider. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of original publication, The MetroHealth System and First Year Cleveland do not accept any liability, with respect to loss, damage, injury or expense arising from any such errors or omissions in the contents of the Safe Sleep Toolkit, or from any individual or entity’s use, viewing or reliance upon the Safe Sleep Toolkit or its content information in any manner.