

BACKGROUND

In the UK, approximately 3 babies die every week from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy/Childhood (SUDI/C). Although there are no definitive explanations for some of these deaths, there is reliable evidence that links issues with an infant's sleep environment and an increased risk of a sudden unexpected death.

WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US

A recent survey by The Lullaby Trust revealed concerning statistics, showing that more than 8% of parents put their babies to sleep in unsafe environments. The work to promote safer sleep for babies arose after studies found that deaths might have been prevented if parents were aware of safer sleeping advice and fully understood what this means to them.

WHY IT MATTERS

Although rates have declined since the 1990's, SIDS rates are higher than they need to be. Child Death Overview Panels continue to report that the majority of sudden infant deaths occur with known risk factors. Some unexpected deaths of babies have identified factors which may have increased the vulnerability of the baby.

SUPPORT AND USEFUL LINKS

[Home | The Lullaby Trust](#)

[Safer Sleep Week | The Lullaby Trust](#)

[Safer sleep for babies easy read card | The Lullaby Trust](#)

[Slings and swaddling | The Lullaby Trust](#)

Safer Sleeping



RISK FACTORS

Research has identified key factors that increase the risk of SUDI/C linked to co-sleeping:

- parent/carer drinking alcohol
- either parent/carer smoking, including in pregnancy
- parents/carers have taken any drugs that make them feel sleepy or reduce awareness
- prematurity (born before 37 weeks)
- low birth weight (below 2.5kg)

RAISING AWARENESS

- Practitioners should observe the sleeping environment and temperature of the room, advise parents and clearly document the discussion within the child's records.
- Practitioners such as social workers should seek advice from relevant health professionals if they are concerned about the sleeping arrangements of a child.
- It is important to consider sleeping arrangements when staying outside of the family home or when travelling, including in a car seat.
- It is important to ensure parents & carers consider the babies' temperature when travelling and using lock in car seats, travel systems and baby slings.

RAISING AWARENESS

Health Professionals who have contact with parents of babies and infants must give clear, current, consistent advice to parents, in relation to safe sleep and sleep environment at every opportunity.

- Safer Sleep leaflets should be discussed with the parents, not just left with them. This may require physically showing them.
- Alternative methods of communicating the safer sleep message must be considered to offer reasonable adjustments (i.e; disability/language).



Shropshire, Telford
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