



Michigan WIC

Nutrition Education Module for State
Sharing

Help Your Baby Sleep Safe and Sound

Self-Directed Education for
Parents and Caregivers of Infants



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This lesson was developed in collaboration with the Michigan Infant Safe Sleep
Program for State Sharing.
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, WIC Program, Lansing, Michigan.

www.michigan.gov/wic February 2021.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Help your Baby Sleep Safe and Sound

In Michigan, 1,287 babies died from sleep-related deaths between 2010 and 2018. In many cases, a safer sleep environment could have saved those babies' lives.

There are things you can do to help your baby sleep much more safely. The ABCs of Safe Sleep are the best place to start:

A: Babies should always sleep **Alone**.

B: Babies should always be placed to sleep on their **Backs**.

C: Babies should always sleep in a **Crib**, bassinet or play yard with a firm mattress and fitted sheet: no blankets, stuffed animals, pillows or anything else should be in the crib.

Your baby should also sleep in the same room as you until they are six to twelve months old, but **not the same bed**.

Without a doubt, keeping your baby safe is important to you! It's normal to need a little help before starting to practice new habits. With some help, you can make the ABCs of Safe Sleep a success for you and your baby. Before you start, please choose the statement that sounds most like you:

- I am pregnant and want to learn more information about safe sleep.
[Turn to Tab A](#)
- I haven't started following the ABCs of safe sleep yet, but I'd like to know more.
[Turn to Tab B](#)
- I am ready to start following the ABCs of Safe Sleep the next time I put my baby to bed.
[Turn to Tab C](#)
- I just started following the ABCs of Safe Sleep, but I'd like help staying on track.
[Turn to Tab D](#)
- I always follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep, and have been for a while
[Turn to Tab E](#)

Tab A

It's wonderful that you are preparing for your baby!

The more familiar you are with the ABCs of Safe Sleep, the easier it will be to follow them once your baby arrives. Get started with learning how to help your baby sleep more safely. Pick one or more statements that best describe your situation and read the related articles:

- I'd like to see what a safe sleeping space looks like.
Article: Safe Sleep for your Baby
Page 1
- Why is it important to follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep?
Article: How to the ABCs of Safe Sleep Can Help Protect Your Baby
Page 2
- Won't my baby choke if he spits up while sleeping on this back?
Article: Learn Why Babies Won't Choke When Sleeping on Their Backs
Page 4
- I plan to breastfeed my baby. How can I breastfeed and follow the ABCs of safe sleep?
Article: How to Breastfeed and Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep
Page 5



[Pregnant Woman by Flickr](#)

SAFE SLEEP

For Your Baby



**Put Baby to Sleep
Alone in Crib**

**Baby Should Sleep
on a Firm Mattress**

**Put Baby on Back
to Sleep**

**No Bumper Pads
or Pillows in Crib**

**No Toys or
Blankets in Crib**

**Use a Tight
Fitting Sheet**

**Do Not Overheat
or Overdress**

Do Not Smoke

Day and Night. **Safe Sleep at EVERY Bedtime.**

How the ABCs of Safe Sleep Can Help Protect Your Baby



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Some parts of parenthood never change, but safe sleep is not one of them. Here's one mother's experience...

“The learning curve for a new parent is big. My mom was my main resource when I first became a mother. She helped me figure out how to create my routines. I was so happy to have my mother around to help me catch a few extra minutes of sleep, but I didn’t count on her practices being so different from mine. I was shocked one day when I woke up from a nap to find my baby sleeping on her tummy - on the couch! She explained that that was how she always did it with me. Apparently, I always slept better on my stomach. She also said that the background noise in the living room helped me sleep. I shared the ABC’s of Safe Sleep with her. I made sure she understood babies should sleep alone, on their backs, and always in a crib. Fortunately, my mom agreed that it all sounded safer.”

I used this experience as a reminder to check with my daycare provider, aunties, and other trusted adults who watch my daughter. Being clear about my expectations for safe sleep is very important.”

- Maria, first-time mother

Parenting has definitely changed over the years. What worked for your parents, your older siblings, or even you when your older children were babies, may have since been found to be unsafe. It's like riding in a car without a seatbelt: a generation ago, it was totally normal, and parents thought nothing of it. Now that we know it's unsafe, we make sure we and our kids are buckled up.

Safe sleep is no different! Decades ago, we just didn't have the information we now have about what helps babies sleep safely. Because experts have been studying how to make babies sleep safer for many years, we now understand some of the ways parents can help protect their babies during every night and nap.

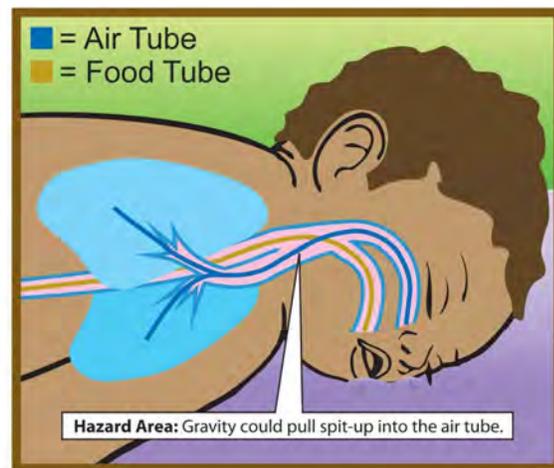
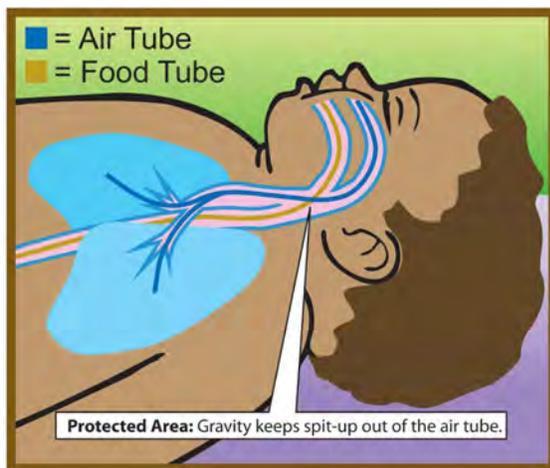
The new recommendations are called the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** and have been proven to keep babies safer when they sleep, whether it's at night or during a nap. Additionally, having your baby sleep in your room, on their own, separate sleeping surface, like a crib, play yard, or bassinet, is also recommended until your baby is 6 - 12 months old. Here are the **ABCs** and how each "rule" can help protect your baby:

- Your baby should sleep **Alone**: If another person or a pet sleeps with your baby, it's very easy to accidentally block his flow of air or roll over on him.
- Your baby should sleep on his **Back**: Babies who sleep on their tummies may actually sleep too well. If your baby starts getting into trouble breathing, he is less likely to wake up on his own and move around if he's sleeping on his stomach.
- Your baby should sleep in a **Crib**: Adult beds, sofas, chairs, and other spaces aren't safe for your baby. There may be areas where your baby can get trapped or soft places that sink and create pockets where he may "re-breathe" the same air again and again. As the pocket becomes saturated with stale air, it can make it hard for your baby to keep breathing.
- Keep in mind that to keep your baby's crib safe, you must also keep it **clear of blankets, stuffed animals, crib bumpers, pillows, pets, and other objects**. Here's why: if your baby falls asleep with a blanket, soft toy or another object, it may cover his mouth and nose and cause him to suffocate.
- To keep your baby warm on chilly nights, **use a sleeper or warm, snug-fitting pajamas**. Sometimes we think babies feel colder than we do, but that's not true! If you are comfortable in your home, chances are your baby is too. Dressing your baby too warmly can put him in danger of overheating and may increase his risk of dying of SIDS (crib death).

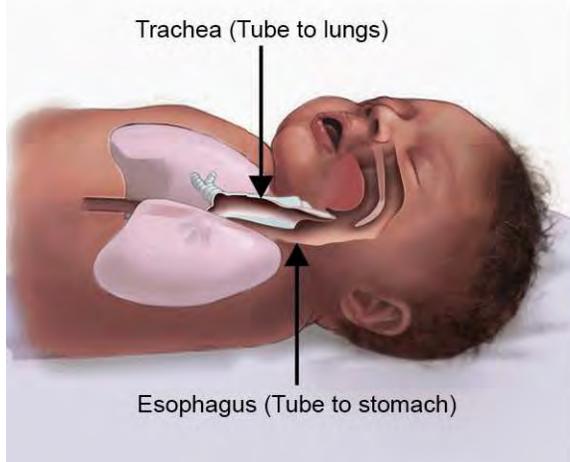
Since you now better understand why the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** are so important, certainly you're eager to get started.

Learn Why Babies Won't Choke When Sleeping on Their Backs

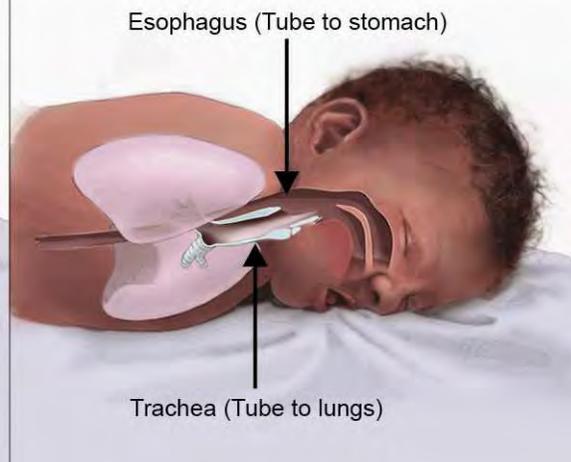
Babies are actually safer on their back. When a baby is on his back, the air tube (trachea) is on top of the esophagus (the tube that carries food). If a baby spits up while on his back, the food and fluid run back into the stomach and not to the lungs. When a baby is on his stomach, the esophagus (or food tube) is on top of the trachea and any food or fluid that is regurgitated or refluxed can more easily pool at the opening of the trachea, making it possible for the baby to aspirate or choke.



Baby in the back sleeping position



Baby in the stomach sleeping position



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How to Breastfeed and Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep



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Breastfeeding is a great way to bond with your baby and give him the best nutrition possible. The following tips will help you follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** while continuing to breastfeed your baby:

Breastfeeding a sleepy baby

Sometimes your baby may fall asleep while breastfeeding. That's OK! Just make sure that, once he's asleep, you put him down in a crib every time. If your baby is already asleep, then move him slowly into his crib, laying him down on his back. Then move your hands away gently. Stay nearby for a few minutes to make sure he stays settled. If your baby startles or begins moving around, you might want to *try placing a hand on his tummy or saying "shhh"* to help soothe him back to sleep.

Midnight feedings

To make midnight feedings easier, bring your baby to bed with you, *removing blankets and pillows from the area you will be nursing*. **After the feeding, return your baby to their crib or bassinet**, which is best located in the same room. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises against nursing on couches or armchairs when a parent is sleepy as the risk of suffocation is very high. Keep the lights low, and speak in a low voice. This will help both you and your baby stay sleepy while he eats. It'll be easier to put him back to bed in his crib, and you will be able to more easily fall back to sleep, too.

Sleeping through the night

Be patient. It's important to note that when experts and parenting books talk about young babies "*sleeping through the night*," they are usually talking about any *6-hour stretch*. That means that if your baby falls asleep at 8 PM and wakes up at 2 AM, he has technically "slept through the night." It's important to *keep your expectations realistic*. No matter where your baby sleeps, it's normal for him to wake up frequently to be fed.

Awake but sleepy

Whenever possible, put your baby in his crib when he's awake but sleepy. This technique can help your baby get used to falling asleep in a crib.

Stick to a routine

Try not to put off bedtime until your baby is fussing or cranky, and don't skip naps: if your baby is overtired, he may have a harder time falling asleep alone.

Need help with a crib?

If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, you will start following the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** at your baby's next nap, or tonight when you put him to bed.



[WIC Works Image Gallery](#)

Congratulations!

You have completed your lesson. It's wonderful that you chose to take this lesson to learn more about safe sleep for your baby. In doing so, it's clear keeping your baby safe is important to you.

Check out Tab F for information on crib safety and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sleep spaces for babies.

If you are ready to create an action plan, go to Tab G. In that section, you will find action plans as well as a sleep log that you can use to track your baby's sleep patterns.

If you still have questions about the ABCs of Safe Sleep, please talk to WIC staff.

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Tab B

It's great that you want learn more about the ABCs of Safe Sleep!



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It can be tricky to get babies to sleep well and it might seem hard to follow all the ABCs of Safe Sleep.

Get started with learning how to help your baby sleep more safely. Pick one or more statements that best describe your situation and read the related articles:

- What does a safe sleeping space look like?
Article: Safe Sleep for your Baby
Page 1
- Why is it important to follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep?
Article: How to the ABCs of Safe Sleep Can Help Protect Your Baby
Page 2
- I am worried my baby will choke if he spits up while sleeping on their back.
Article: Learn Why Babies Won't Choke When Sleeping on Their Back
Page 4
- How can I safely breastfeed my baby and follow safe sleep?
Article: How to Breastfeed and Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep
Page 5

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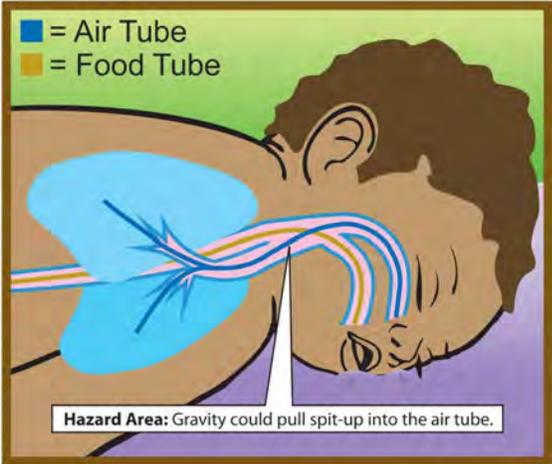
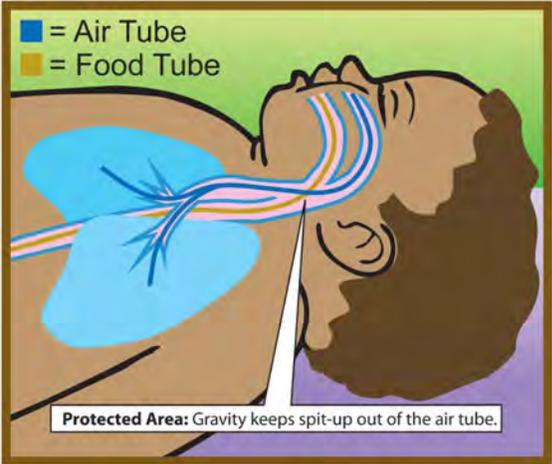
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Since you now better understand why the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** are so important, certainly you are eager to get started.

Learn Why Babies Won't Choke When Sleeping on Their Backs

Babies are safer on their back. When a baby is on their back, the air tube (trachea) is on top of the esophagus (the tube that carries food). If a baby spits up while on his back, the food and fluid run back into the stomach and not to the lungs. When a baby is on their stomach, the esophagus (or food tube) is on top of the trachea and any food or fluid that is regurgitated or refluxed can more easily pool at the opening of the trachea, making it possible for the baby to aspirate or choke.



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How To Breastfeed And Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep



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Breastfeeding is a great way to bond with your baby and give him the best nutrition possible. The following tips will help you follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** while continuing to breastfeed your baby:

Breastfeeding a sleepy baby

Sometimes your baby may fall asleep while breastfeeding. That's OK! Just make sure that, once he's asleep, you put him down in a crib every time. If your baby is already asleep, then move him slowly into his crib, laying him down on his back. Then move your hands away gently. Stay nearby for a few minutes to make sure he stays settled. If your baby startles or begins moving around, you might want to *try placing a hand on his tummy or saying "shhh"* to help soothe him back to sleep.

Midnight feedings

To make midnight feedings easier, bring your baby to bed with you, *removing blankets and pillows from the area you will be nursing*. **After the feeding, return your baby to their crib or bassinet**, which is best located in the same room. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises against nursing on couches or armchairs when a parent is sleepy as the risk of suffocation is very high. Keep the lights low, and speak in a low voice. This will help both you and your baby stay sleepy while he eats. It'll be easier to put him back to bed in his crib, and you will be able to more easily fall back to sleep, too.

Sleeping through the night

Be patient. It's important to note that when experts and parenting books talk about young babies *"sleeping through the night,"* they are usually talking about any *6-hour stretch*. That

means that if your baby falls asleep at 8 PM and wakes up at 2 AM, he has technically “slept through the night.” It’s important to *keep your expectations realistic*. No matter where your baby sleeps, it’s normal for him to wake up frequently to be fed.

Awake but sleepy

Whenever possible, put your baby in his crib when he’s awake but sleepy. This technique can help your baby get used to falling asleep in a crib.

Stick to a routine

Try not to put off bedtime until your baby is fussing or cranky, and don’t skip naps: if your baby is overtired, he may have a harder time falling asleep alone.

Need help with a crib?

If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, you will start following the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** at your baby’s next nap, or tonight when you put him to bed.



[WIC Works Image Gallery](#)

Congratulations!

You have completed your lesson. Whether you're ready to start now or need a little more time before jumping in, we offer action plans to help you get started. If you are ready to create an action plan, go to Tab G. In that section, you will find action plans as well as a sleep log that you can use to track your baby's sleep patterns.

Check out Tab F for information on crib safety and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sleep spaces for babies.

You may still have some concerns as you think about applying the information you learned today. If you do, please talk to WIC staff.

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Tab C

It's great that you want to keep your baby safe by following the ABCs of Safe Sleep!

Get started with learning how to help your baby sleep more safely. Pick one or more statements that best describe your situation and read the related articles:

- My baby doesn't sleep well when laid down on his or her back.
Article: How to Help your Baby Go "Back to Sleep" Every Time.
Page 2
- When put to bed in a crib, my baby doesn't always fall asleep or stay asleep for very long.
Article: 5 Ways to Help your Baby Fall Asleep and Stay Asleep – In a Crib.
Page 4
- I'm breastfeeding, and it's often just easier to bring my baby to bed with me while I nurse.
Article: How to Breastfeed and Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep.
Page 6



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How To Help Your Baby Go "Back To Sleep" Every Time



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What matters most is what is best for my baby! Here is one moms experience:

“When we recently found out we were having a baby girl a friend of mine gave me her Baby’s First Year book. I flipped through it and noticed things had changed a lot in the years since my sons’ births. Crib bumpers and stuffed animals are now frowned upon. The biggest change is room sharing. The current American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation is to place your sleeping baby in your bedroom for at least the first 6 months of life. Room sharing increases the ability for parents and babies to wake easily. This is important and may be critical in preventing SIDS. The waking up that happens with room sharing could be the exact thing that protects the baby. Because we want our baby to be safe, we gave her a place of her own in the bassinet next to our bed.”

- Sophia, mother of 3

For many years, moms, dads, grandparents, and even doctors believed that babies should sleep on their tummies. It’s likely that’s how your parents put you to sleep when you were a baby. Over the years, *experts learned that it is actually much safer for babies to sleep on their **backs**.* Babies who sleep on their tummies have a harder time waking themselves up if they are having a difficult time breathing, and if their faces create a dent in the mattress, they may end up “re-breathing” the same air over and over. However, you may be worried that your baby won’t fall asleep or stay asleep if you put her down on her back. It’s true that not all babies sleep easily on

their backs, but by following a few simple steps, you can help your baby sleep well while keeping her as safe as possible.

Try these ideas:

- Whenever possible, put your baby to bed when she's ***awake but sleepy***. You will be able to tell your baby is getting sleepy if her eyes are droopy or she starts to yawn. This technique can help your baby get used to falling asleep on her Back.
- **Try not to put off bedtime** until your baby is fussing or cranky, and don't skip naps: if your baby is overtired, she may have a harder time falling asleep on her back.

If your baby regularly cries for hours at a stretch or won't settle down to sleep even after you try all these techniques, it's possible she might have colic, reflux, or another health issue that's making her uncomfortable. Don't struggle alone! Talk to your baby's healthcare provider to find out if there is anything going on and to get ideas for helping her (and you) get some sleep.

- **Create a bedtime routine.** It doesn't have to be long or complicated! Something as simple as *closing the blinds and reading a book* in the same chair before every nap and in the evening can help "*cue*" your baby that it's bedtime. Young babies may not be able to easily soothe themselves to sleep right away. Be patient: eventually, your baby will begin to learn to associate your routine with falling asleep, and will more easily be able to fall asleep on her back.
- Once your baby is asleep on her back, watch her for a few minutes to make sure she stays settled. If your baby startles or begins moving around you might want to *try placing a hand on her tummy and saying "shh"* to soothe her back to sleep.
- If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, it will be easy to continue the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** even when your baby is having a difficult night.

5 Ways To Help Your Baby Fall Asleep And Stay Asleep - In A Crib



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If your baby sometimes sleeps in an adult bed or other space, it can take a little effort to encourage her to fall asleep and stay asleep in her own crib. A crib can be a traditional crib, a bassinet or a play yard. If you have had a hard time getting your baby to fall asleep in a crib, it's worth trying again because it's so much safer.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends babies share a room with their parents for the first six months to one-year of their life. "Room sharing" means your baby is in your room, but in their own safe sleeping space, like a crib, play yard or bassinet, not in your bed. This can be a comfort for both parent and baby.

Fortunately, there are some easy things you can try that will make it much more likely your baby will be able to fall asleep safely in her crib - and stay that way. Try these tips:

Sleepwear – the right choice

To keep your baby warm on chilly nights, **try a sleeper or warm, snug-fitting pajamas.** *Babies really don't need blankets* in their beds to stay warm. If you are comfortable in your home, chances are your baby is too. Dressing your baby too warmly can put her in danger of overheating and is unsafe.

Transfer baby to safe space

Sometimes your baby may fall asleep in her car seat or stroller, or in your arms. That's OK! Just make sure that, **once she's asleep, you put her down in a crib every time.** If your baby is

already asleep, then move her slowly into her crib, laying her down on her back. Then move your hands away gently.

Stay close for a few moments

Once your baby is in her crib, stay nearby for a few minutes to make sure she stays settled. If your baby startles or begins moving around, you might want to *try placing a hand on her tummy or saying “shhh”* to help soothe her back to sleep.

Keep baby sleepy during the night

When baby wakes up in the middle of the night, help her stay sleepy. *Keep the lights low, speak in a quiet voice,* and stay close to her crib while you feed or change her.

Sleeping through the night

Be patient. It’s important to note that when experts and parenting books talk about young babies *“sleeping through the night,”* they are usually talking about *any 6-hour stretch.* That means that if your baby falls asleep at 8 PM and wakes up at 2 AM, she has technically “slept through the night.” It’s important to keep your expectations realistic. No matter where your baby sleeps, it’s normal for her to wake up frequently to be fed or changed.

Need a crib?

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Stick to a routine

Try not to put off bedtime until your baby is fussing or cranky, and don’t skip naps: if your baby is overtired, he may have a harder time falling asleep alone.

Need help with a crib?

If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, it will be easy to continue the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** even when your baby is having a difficult night.



[WIC Works Image Gallery](#)

Congratulations!

You have completed your lesson. Now that you've gotten some information about the **ABCs of Safe Sleep**, it's time to start putting it into practice. We offer action plans to help you get started. If you are ready to create an action plan, go to Tab G. In that section, you will find action plans as well as a sleep log that you can use to track your baby's sleep patterns.

Check out Tab F for information on crib safety and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sleep spaces for babies.

You may still have some concerns as you think about applying the information you learned today. If you do, please talk to WIC staff.

Please complete the Client Feedback Form provided and return it to the appropriate WIC staff member.



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Tab D

Keep up the good work!

It's fantastic you recently began following all the ABCs of Safe Sleep. You can be proud that you've committed to helping your baby sleep safely, every time. Sometimes it can be tricky to get babies to fall asleep - and stay asleep - safely every single time.

Choose the statements that sound most helpful to you and review the related articles in this section for helpful tips to continue to practice safe sleep.

- Help your baby fall asleep and stay asleep.
Article: 8 Ways to Help Your Baby Fall Asleep – And Stay Asleep – Safely
Page 1
- Safely breastfeed your baby at nap time and bedtime.
Article: How to Breastfeed and Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep
Page 3
- Discover ways to bond with your baby at bedtime.
Article: 3 Ideas to Help you Bond with your Baby
Page 5



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8 Ways To Help Your Baby Fall Asleep - And Stay Asleep - Safely



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You already know that babies shouldn't sleep on their tummies or in Mom or Dad's bed. But did you know the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that your baby share a room with their parents for the first six months to one year of their life? Sharing a room or "room sharing" means that your baby is in your room in their own safe sleeping space, like a crib, play yard or bassinet, not in your bed.

It can seem really hard to follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** if your baby wakes frequently and you are a tired new parent. Fortunately, there are some easy things you can try that will make it much more likely your baby will be able to fall asleep safely in her crib - and stay that way. Try these tips:

1. Whenever possible, put your baby to bed when she's **awake but sleepy**. You will be able to tell your baby is getting sleepy if her eyes are droopy or she starts to yawn. This technique can help your baby to get used to falling asleep in a crib.
2. **Try not to put off bedtime** until your baby is fussing or cranky, and don't skip naps: if your baby is overtired, she may have a harder time falling asleep alone.
3. To keep your baby warm on chilly nights, add a sleep sack over warm, snug fitting pajamas rather than a blanket. If you are comfortable in your home, chances are your baby is too. Dressing your baby too warmly can be unsafe and won't help her sleep better.

4. Sometimes your baby may fall asleep in her car seat or stroller, or in your arms. That's OK! Just make sure that, once asleep, you **put your baby down in a crib every time**. If your baby is already asleep, then move your baby slowly into the crib, laying your baby down on their back. Then move your hands away gently.
5. Once your baby is in the crib, stay nearby for a few minutes to make sure your baby stays settled. *If your baby startles or begins moving around, you might want to try placing a hand on their tummy or saying "shhh" to help soothe back to sleep.*
6. **Create a bedtime routine.** It does not have to be long or complicated! Something as simple as closing the blinds and reading a book in the same chair before every nap and in the evening can help "cue" your baby that it is almost bedtime. Young babies may not be able to easily soothe themselves to sleep right away. Be patient: eventually, your baby will begin to learn to associate your routine with falling asleep.
7. When baby wakes up in the middle of the night, **help your baby stay sleepy**. Keep the lights low, speak in a quiet voice, and stay close to her crib while you feed or change her.
8. **Be patient.** It is important to note that when experts and parenting books talk about young babies "sleeping through the night," they are usually talking about any 6-hour stretch. That means that if your baby falls asleep at 8 PM and wakes up at 2 AM, she has technically "slept through the night." It is important to keep your expectations realistic. No matter where your baby sleeps, it is normal for to wake up frequently to be fed or changed.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, you can start following the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** at your baby's next nap, or tonight when you put her to bed.



[WIC Works Image Gallery](#)

How To Breastfeed And Follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep



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Breastfeeding is a great way to bond with your baby and give him the best nutrition possible. The following tips will help you follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** while continuing to breastfeed your baby:

Breastfeeding a sleepy baby

Sometimes your baby may fall asleep while breastfeeding. That's OK! Just make sure that, once he's asleep, you put them down in a crib every time. If your baby is already asleep, then move them slowly into his crib, laying him down on his back. Then move your hands away gently. Stay nearby for a few minutes to make sure your baby stays settled. If your baby startles or begins moving around, you might want to *try placing a hand on their tummy or saying "shhhh"* to help soothe them back to sleep.

Midnight feedings

To make midnight feedings easier, bring your baby to bed with you, *removing blankets and pillows from the area you will be nursing*. **After the feeding, return your baby to their crib or bassinet**, which is best located in the same room. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises against nursing on couches or armchairs when a parent is sleepy as the risk of suffocation is very high. Keep the lights low and speak in a low voice. This will help both you and your baby stay sleepy while he eats. It will be easier to put your baby back to bed in the crib, and you will be able to more easily fall back to sleep, too.

Sleeping through the night

Be patient. It is important to note that when experts and parenting books talk about young babies *"sleeping through the night,"* they are usually talking about a *6-hour stretch*. That means that if your baby falls asleep at 8 PM and wakes up at 2 AM, they have technically *"slept through the night."* It is important to *keep your expectations realistic*. No matter where your

baby sleeps, it is normal to wake up frequently to be fed.

Awake but sleepy

Whenever possible, put your baby in the crib when awake but sleepy. This technique can help your baby get used to falling asleep in a crib.

Stick to a routine

Try not to put off bedtime until your baby is fussing or cranky, and do not skip naps: if your baby is overtired, they may have a harder time falling asleep alone.

Need help with a crib?

If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, it will be easy to continue the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** even when your baby is having a difficult night.

3 Ideas To Help You Bond With Your Baby



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You already know that it's much safer for your baby to sleep on her back in her own crib than for her to sleep in your bed. If your baby sleeps in your bed, you may roll over on her, or she could become trapped between the mattress and the wall and suffocate. It is recommended that you share your room with your baby but not your bed. Having your baby in your room, in their own, safe sleep space, such as a crib, play yard, or bassinet, for the first 6 - 12 months of your baby's life can be a comfort to both you and your baby.

Many parents worry that if their baby sleeps alone in a crib, they will miss out on crucial bonding time. Don't worry it's easy to bond with your baby and still help her sleep safely. Try these tips:

- **Create a bedtime routine.** It doesn't have to be long or complicated! Something as simple as *closing the blinds and reading a book* in the same chair before every nap and in the evening can help "cue" your baby that it's almost bedtime. Young babies may not be able to easily soothe themselves to sleep right away. Be patient: eventually, your baby will begin to associate your routine with falling asleep, and *as a bonus, you'll get extra cuddling time.*
- When baby wakes up in the middle of the night, **soothe her while helping her stay sleepy.** *Keep the lights low, speak in a quiet voice, and stay close* to her crib while you feed or change her. This technique can help your baby get used to falling asleep in a crib.
- If you like rocking or cuddling your baby to sleep, that's OK! Just make sure that, once she's asleep, you **put your baby down in a crib every time.** If your baby is already asleep, then move them slowly into a *crib*, laying your baby down on their back. Then move your hands away gently.
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Now that you have some ideas on how to bond with your baby, hopefully, you will follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** when your baby arrives and keep your baby in a separate sleeping space.

Congratulations!

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Check out Tab F for information on crib safety and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sleep spaces for babies.

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Tab E

Great!

Practicing the ABCs of Safe Sleep is such an important way to care for your baby. You can be proud that you've committed to helping your baby sleep safely, every time. Sometimes it can be tricky to get babies to fall asleep - and stay asleep - safely every single time.

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Now that you have some ideas for helping your baby fall asleep and stay asleep safely, hopefully, it will be easy to continue the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** even when your baby is having a difficult night.

3 Ideas To Help You Bond With Your Baby



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You already know that it's much safer for your baby to sleep on her back in her own crib than for her to sleep in your bed. If your baby sleeps in your bed, you may roll over on her, or she could become trapped between the mattress and the wall and suffocate. It is recommended that you share your room with your baby but not your bed. Having your baby in your room, in their own, safe sleep space, such as a crib, play yard, or bassinet, for the first 6 - 12 months of your baby's life can be a comfort to both you and your baby.

Many parents worry that if their baby sleeps alone in a crib, they will miss out on crucial bonding time. Don't worry it's easy to bond with your baby and still help her sleep safely. Try these tips:

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- If you do not have a crib and would like help finding one, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn about Cribs for Kids.

Now that you have some ideas on how to bond with your baby, hopefully, you will be able to follow the **ABCs of Safe Sleep** when your baby arrives and keep your baby in a separate sleeping space.

Congratulations!

You have completed your lesson and are ready to keep your baby sleeping safely!

Check out Tab F for information on crib safety and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sleep spaces for babies.

If you are ready to create an action plan, go to Tab G. In that section, you will find action plans as well as a sleep log that you can use to track your baby's sleep patterns.

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[NICHQSSB](#)

Tab F

Crib Information

How To Make Sure Your Baby's Crib Is Safe



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Cribs can be expensive, so many babies sleep in cribs that have been bought at a yard sale or handed down from a family member. Unfortunately, older cribs are often unsafe. If you got your crib second-hand, it's important to make sure it meets current safety standards:

1. The slats and corner posts of a crib should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. If the slats are farther apart, your baby could become trapped in them. Cribs with decorative cutouts can also pose a trapping threat.
2. Corner posts should be at and meet up with the end panels. If you are using an heirloom crib that has decorative knobs, you can saw them off and sand down rough edges.
3. All hardware, like bolts and screws, must be tight and secure. The wood should be free of cracks. Also, be sure there are no rough or sharp spots that could poke or pinch your baby.
4. Drop-side cribs are not considered safe and shouldn't be used.
5. Older cribs may contain lead-based paint. If you think the crib you are using was made before 1978, it's safest to remove the paint and re-paint with lead-free enamel. Any crib with peeling or cracked paint should be repainted, even if the original paint is lead-free.
6. The mattress should be firm and snugly against the inside of the crib, with room for no more than two of Mom's fingers between the crib and mattress. A mattress for a full-sized crib should be at least 27 1/4 inches by 51 3/8 inches, but no more than six inches thick. If you buy a new mattress, make sure to remove the plastic cover!
7. The crib should hold only two things: a tight-fitting sheet and your baby. Never put your baby to bed with blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, pets, or toys.

If you find that your baby's crib isn't safe and you aren't able to make it safer by re-painting or tightening hardware, you should get your baby another crib right away. If you can't afford a new crib, contact your local health department or visit <https://cribsforkids.org/our-partners/> to learn more about Cribs for Kids.

Hopefully you can now rest easy knowing that your baby is sleeping in a safe crib.

Choosing the Perfect Bed for Your Baby



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Your baby spends a lot of his time sleeping. The bed you choose for your baby to sleep is a big decision. Here is some information to help you make the best choice for your family and your baby. It is important to consider your individual situation when choosing a sleeping space for your baby. The biggest factors to think about are:

How much space do you have?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation is to place your sleeping baby in your bedroom for at least his first 6 months of life. How much free space you have will help you decide which sleeping space is best for your family.

How long will your choice last as your baby grows?

Your baby will grow quickly. This is an important factor to keep in mind. It might be a good idea to create a plan for the first year.

What is your budget? Will you buy new or get something used?

How much can you spend? Your budget will play a role in the selection you can afford. The plan you create will help keep your budget in check. If your budget does not have room for a purchase, call your local health department to inquire about options. You can also check out the non-profit organization, *Cribs for Kids*. They have partnered with stores and organizations to help parents in need of a safe sleeping space for their infant.

New vs. Used - What to Know

In terms of safety standards, sleeping spaces for your baby are under constant study. Be sure to know the most current recommendations for the equipment you plan to use. It is also important to research the sleeping space you are considering for safety recalls. The information below will help you make wise choices.

TYPES OF INFANT BEDS

When choosing sleeping spaces for baby, pick equipment that has been reviewed by the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) International. This will give you peace of mind and allow for everyone to sleep more soundly.

Check out each type of safe infant bed on the next pages to see the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The Bassinet



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Bassinet Safety:

- Always use a new bassinet. One that is used likely won't meet safety standards.
- Be aware of attached wheels. Though these allow for easy moving, they also pose a safety hazard. Find wheels that lock.
- The mattress should be firm and snugly fit the bassinet on all sides.
- No bumpers, toys, pillows, or blankets should be placed in the bassinet.
- The bassinet should be cleared of anything except your baby.

Advantages of Bassinets:

- You can easily move the bassinet closer to you. It can also just as easily be moved out of the way when not in use.
- These sleeping spaces provide comfort to your baby because they are smaller.

Disadvantages of Bassinets:

- The smaller space can be outgrown quickly. You will need to replace the sleeping space when your baby is about 15 pounds.

The Play Yard (Pack-n-Play)



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Play Yard Safety:

- Play yards are subject to new Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards.
- They typically have mesh siding which allows for less chance of suffocation.
- Included mattresses are thin and firm.
- No bumpers, toys, pillows, or blankets should be placed in the play yard.
- The play yard should be cleared of anything except your baby.

Advantages of Play Yards:

- Play yards take up less space than cribs.
- They are also easier to move.
- You can take play yards with you wherever you go.
- They set up and break down quickly and easily.

Disadvantages of Play Yards:

- Though smaller than most cribs, these are still one of the larger alternative options.
- Play yards are not as sturdy as cribs. Because it is designed to be portable, the materials can eventually wear out with time and use.

The Traditional Crib



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Crib Safety:

- Cribs should have four sides that stay in place.
- Cribs sold before 2009 had drop-down railings. These are now considered unsafe.
- Railings should have slats no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.
- There should be no missing or damaged parts (missing screws, slats or hardware).
- The mattress should be firm and snugly fit the crib on all sides.
- No bumpers, toys, pillows or blankets should be placed in the crib.
- The crib should be cleared of anything except you baby.

Advantages of Cribs:

- The crib is a long-term solution. Your baby will use this until your baby transitions to a bed. Making this choice will allow you to have a reliable place for baby to sleep into his toddler years.
- It has solid construction built to last. Many cribs also allow for mattress height adjustments.

Disadvantages of Cribs:

- Cribs are big. If your space is limited in your shared bedroom, this option may not be realistic.
- Cost can be higher than other options.

There are other products that are marketed for infant sleep, including in-bed sleepers and bedside sleepers. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not make a recommendation for or against the use of either in-bed sleepers or bedside sleepers, because there have been no studies on whether these products are linked to SIDS or other sleep-related infant death. If you still have questions about the choosing the best sleep space for your baby, please talk to WIC staff.

In addition, car seats, swings and other sitting devices are not recommended for routine sleep. Babies can suffocate while sleeping in a swing or any seat that puts them on an incline. An incline could cause a baby's head to slump and his or her airway could be pinched. A baby's airway is only about the size of a drinking straw! Also, a baby can more easily roll over when sleeping on an incline even if your baby hasn't done so before. Rolling over in an inclined seat can cause a baby to suffocate. If your baby falls asleep in a swing, bouncy seat, car seat, or other sitting device, they should be moved to a crib, bassinet, or pack-n-play as soon as it is possible.

Options to AVOID FOR SLEEPING:

- Swings
- Car Seats
- Rock-n-Play Sleepers
- Bouncers



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Tab G

Action Plans

ACTION PLAN: LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ABCs of Safe Sleep



It can be hard to do new things, so it's understandable that you don't think you're ready to try this yet. Please keep in mind how important it is to follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep and make sure your baby always sleeps:

It sounds like you might not be ready to get started with all the ABCs of Safe Sleep, but even if you can just make one small change, it will help keep your baby safe. Look at this list of simple things you can try right away. Choose one or two, and on the line below, write down when you will try this.

I can...

Alone. If your baby sleeps with an older sibling, parent, or caregiver, they may roll over on your baby and smother her, or suffocate her with an arm or their clothing. Pets may also be dangerous to your baby as she sleeps.

On her Back. Babies who sleep on their stomachs have a harder time waking themselves up if they get into trouble breathing. They may also "re-breathe" trapped air and smother.

I CAN...

In a Crib. Adult beds, sofas, and other places are not safe places for a baby to sleep. Babies can become trapped in empty spaces between walls and a bed, under pillows, and behind cushions. They may also roll off of the bed, even if they have never been able to roll over before.

- Put my baby's crib in a room with a door that closes all the way. That will help keep curious pets or older siblings from climbing in and making my baby unsafe.
- Call my health department or check cribsforkids.org to see if I qualify to receive a free crib if I don't already have one.
- Remove any extra objects from my baby's crib. It should contain only a tight-fitting sheet and my baby. By making sure there are no blankets, pillows, bumpers, toys, stuffed animals, pets, or anything else in her crib, I will be protecting my baby from suffocating or strangling.
- Create a calming routine to help my baby settle down at bedtime. This will make it easier for my baby to fall asleep alone on her back and make nighttime easier for everyone.

I will make this change on this date:

REMEMBER...

Every step you take toward following the ABCs of Safe Sleep will help protect your baby. Talk to your children, co-parent, and your baby's caregivers about the ABCs of Safe Sleep, too. Remember, you have the power to make your baby's sleep safer!

Action Plan: Follow The ABCs of Safe Sleep At EVERY Bedtime

Putting your baby to sleep alone, on his back, and in a crib, is a great way to keep him safe as he sleeps. It's fantastic that you're committed to practicing the ABCs of Safe Sleep every time you put your baby down.

Sometimes babies need help learning to fall asleep alone or on their backs, and it's also important to make sure your crib is safe before you put your baby in it. Below are some ideas that can help you overcome common obstacles that can make it difficult to practice the ABCs of Safe Sleep at each naptime and bedtime.

Some things to keep in mind if you run into obstacles while learning to practice the ABCs of Safe Sleep at every bedtime:

- When babies get over-tired, they can become cranky and restless. This can make it more difficult for your baby to fall asleep **alone**.
- When babies are placed to sleep on their **backs**, they may startle or wake more easily. This is actually a good thing, as it means your baby will have an easier time waking himself up if he gets into trouble breathing. But it may mean that it will take a little extra work to get your baby to fall asleep and stay asleep on his back every time.
- A **crib** is the safest place for your baby to sleep. However, caregivers often put things in their baby's crib that can make them unsafe, like blankets, pillows, crib bumpers, toys, and even other children or pets. To keep your baby safe, it's important to make sure that his crib contains only a tight-fitting sheet and a firm mattress. You should also check to make sure that the crib meets current safety standards and hasn't been recalled.



Create Your Action Plan

Check out the following list of ideas!

Create Your Action Plan:

Choose a few of the following things that you don't do consistently, and commit to making them part of your baby's bedtime right away:

To help my baby sleep *alone* every time, I can:

- Make the transition to bedtime as easy as possible by watching my baby for sleepiness signs, like rubbing his eyes or yawning.
- Put my baby to bed around the same times every day and evening. This will help him start to learn when bedtime is coming so he can get used to soothing himself to sleep.
- Arrange for older children to sleep in their own beds and not with baby. Creating a separate bedtime routine for older siblings may help.

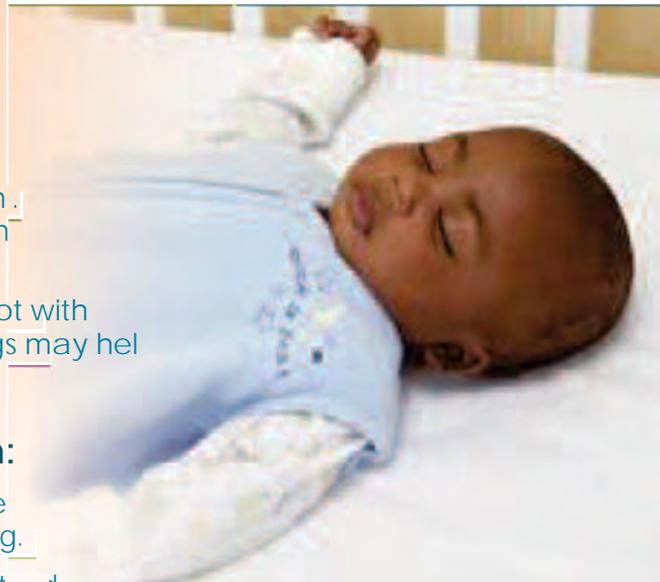
To help my baby sleep on his *back* every time, I can:

- Try a white noise machine or phone app, or a fan running in the background, to help keep easily-startled babies settled and sleeping.
- Talk to other caregivers and my partner to make sure they understand that my baby should always sleep on his back.
- Plan to stay close to my baby's crib for a few minutes while he's still learning to fall asleep on his back. Placing a hand on my baby's tummy or making a shushing sound may help soothe him back to sleep if he stirs.

To help my baby sleep in a *crib* every time, I can:

- Commit to laying my baby down in his crib every time he falls asleep somewhere else.
- Put my baby's crib in a secure area with a door that shuts tightly so that older children or pets can't climb in while my baby is asleep.
- Make sure my baby's crib is up-to-date and safe by calling the manufacturer and making sure it hasn't been recalled.
- Check my baby's crib before every bedtime to make sure it is free of toys, pillows, blankets, bumpers, pets, and anything else except for a tight-fitting sheet.

Now that you've chosen a few ideas from the list above that will help you stay on track following the ABCs of Safe Sleep, write on the lines below when you will try each one:



REMEMBER...

It can be tempting to skip the ABCs of Safe Sleep when you're busy or tired but your baby needs a safe place to sleep every time. Also, by consistently following the ABCs of Safe Sleep, you will help teach baby that this is the best and most comfortable way for him to sleep, and soon he'll be able to fall asleep more quickly and stay asleep for longer periods of time on his own. Make putting your baby to bed easier, and also give him the safest possible sleep, by making sure he sleeps alone, on his back, and in a crib every time — no exceptions!

ACTION PLAN: TEACH BABY TO FALL ASLEEP ALONE

It's fantastic that you want to help your baby learn to fall asleep Alone. It's such an important way to protect your baby as she sleeps.



Some babies need a little help learning to sleep alone. Make a plan so that over the next few bedtimes, you can gradually start teaching your baby to sleep on her own. Here are some things to keep in mind:

If your baby has a hard time falling asleep without you,

make the transition as easy as possible. Babies often have a harder time falling or staying asleep if they are overtired, so watch your baby for signs of sleepiness, such as rubbing her eyes or yawning. Pay attention for a few days, and you'll probably see that she begins to get tired around the same times each day. On the lines below, write down when you observe your baby getting sleepy on each of those three days.

Day 1: _____

Day 2: _____

Day 3: _____

After you pay attention to your baby's sleepiness signs for a few days, you should have a good idea of when you can expect her to get sleepy. Write down her bedtime and naptimes on your calendar, or if you have a smartphone, set alerts to remind you when bedtime is coming up.



REMEMBER... Keeping naptimes and bedtimes consistent will help your baby sleep better every night!



Remember that young babies may wake up every 2-3 hours, all night long.

To make it easier for you to care for your baby and then get her back to bed safely afterwards, it's important to make sure you are getting enough sleep yourself. Below are some ideas to help you get enough sleep when you have a young baby. Check off the ideas that you will try soon:

I can...

- Ask a co-parent or other caregiver to take over some nighttime feedings so I can rest.
- If I'm breastfeeding, I can feed my baby and then hand her off to a responsible caregiver to finish putting her to bed so I can get more sleep.
- Nap while my baby sleeps or enlist responsible caregivers to give me regular rest breaks so that I am better rested. This will make it easier to follow the ABCs of Safe Sleep every time.
- Make sure my baby's other caregivers understand that they should always put my baby to bed alone, on her back, and in a crib, so I can feel confident she is sleeping safely while I rest.

On the line below, write down when you will try some of the ideas above.

If you have other children who usually sleep next to your baby,

it's important to find ways to keep them in their own sleeping space. Below are some ideas that can help. Check off the ones you think you can try soon:

I can...

- Give older siblings extra cuddle time throughout the day so that they can be more patient as I put my baby to sleep alone.
- Create separate bedtime routines for my baby and her older siblings. Perhaps a co-parent or other caregiver can read or play a quiet game with my older children while I put the baby to bed.
- If my baby's older brother or sister likes to sleep next to her, perhaps I can give them more play time during the day and include big brother or sister in my baby's bedtime routine. Big siblings may be able to rock my baby with help, sing to her, or read her a story.

On the lines below write down when you will try the ideas you chose above.

While it can be tempting to take baby to bed with you occasionally, remember that it will be easier to keep your baby on a good sleeping schedule if you put her to sleep the same way again and again.

Teaching your baby to sleep alone is one important way to keep her safe. Keep following your action plan, and it will get easier and easier to put baby to sleep the safe way: alone, on her back, and in a crib — every time.

ACTION PLAN: PLAN TO TEACH BABY TO SLEEP ON HIS OR HER BACK



It's awesome that you are committed to helping your baby learn to fall asleep on his back. Since babies can startle more easily when put to sleep on their backs, it sometimes takes a little longer to teach them to fall and stay asleep in that position. Below are some ideas that may help make it easier for your baby to sleep on his back. Check off the ideas you will try soon.

I can...

- Plan to take a little extra time putting my baby to bed in case he startles or wakes up when placed on his back.
- Try placing a hand on my baby's tummy or making a shushing sound to soothe him to sleep or help him settle again if he stirs.
- Use a white noise machine, a white noise app on my phone, or even a fan to create soothing background noise while my baby is falling asleep. This can help him stay settled.
- Watch my baby for signs of sleepiness, like yawning or rubbing his eyes, and then start putting him to bed as soon as he's sleepy. When babies are overtired, they often have a harder time falling asleep.
- Keep naptime and bedtime consistent so that my baby will get in the habit of going to sleep around the same time each day and evening. This will make it easier for him to soothe himself to sleep on his back, or settle down again if he wakes up.

On the lines below write down when you will try the ideas you chose above:



REMEMBER...

Putting your baby to bed on his back every time is an important way to help keep him safe. Keep following your action plan, and it will get easier and easier to put baby to sleep the safe way: alone, on his back, and in a crib — *every time*.

ACTION PLAN: HELP BABY SLEEP SAFELY IN A CRIB

It's fantastic that you're ready to start helping your baby learn to sleep in a **Crib** and to make sure her crib is safe. The steps below can help you begin to put your baby to sleep in her crib, and to make sure the crib is as safe as it can be, starting soon.



STEP 1: Make sure baby's crib is safe.

Take a look at the checklist below and mark off the steps you need to take to make your baby's crib safer:

I can...

- Make sure the crib is free of blankets, bumpers, toys, stuffed animals, pillows, pets, and other objects.
- Check the crib sheet to make sure it fits tightly and doesn't pull off if I tug the corners. Remember, my crib should have only a fitted sheet – the kind with elastic on the corners – and it should go over the mattress, not on my baby.
- Make sure my baby's crib mattress is firm so that my baby won't create pockets where she could get trapped.
- Check that the crib is new and/or follows current safety standards.
- If I don't have a crib, I can call my local health department or check www.cribsforkids.org/requestacrib to see if I may qualify for a safe, free or low-cost crib for my baby.
- Dress my baby in warm pajamas or a sleeper and make sure my home is just warm enough that I am comfortable sitting still in regular clothes. If I am comfortable without a blanket, my baby will be, too!

On the line below, write down when you will begin making your crib safer by following this checklist:

STEP 2: Teach baby to sleep soundly in a crib.

Sometimes babies need a little help falling asleep in a crib. The following steps can make it easier to help your baby fall asleep on her own. Choose one or two you'd like to try right away.

I can...

- Watch my baby for signs of sleepiness, such as rubbing her eyes or yawning, and put her to bed right away – before she gets cranky.
- Keep naptimes and bedtimes consistent to help baby begin to learn when it's time for bed.
- Set alerts on my phone or write down baby's bedtimes on my calendar to help me remember to put her to bed around the same times everyday.
- Create a soothing bedtime routine that baby and I both enjoy.



On the line below, write down when you will try the ideas above:

Remember that putting your baby to bed in a **crib** every time is an important way to help keep her safe. Keep following your action plan, and it will get easier and easier to put baby to sleep the safe way: alone, on her back, and in a crib – every time. You have the power to protect your baby while she is asleep!

STEP 3: Make a plan to put baby in her crib if she falls asleep somewhere else.

It's natural to love holding and rocking your baby, and sometimes they will fall asleep while being fed or held. That's OK! Just remember to put your baby down in her crib after she falls asleep every time. Here are some easy things you can do to make this easier. Check off one or two that you'd like to try soon:

I can...

- Put a comfortable chair near my baby's crib so that I won't have to carry her far if she falls asleep while being rocked or fed.
- Check the crib before I start rocking or feeding my baby to make sure it is still empty except for a tight-fitting sheet. If a toy, clothing or any other object has made its way into baby's crib since the last bedtime, or if the sheet has come loose, it will be much easier to fix it when I'm not holding a sleeping baby!
- Make sure my co-parent and other caregivers understand that baby should be put to bed in her crib every time she falls asleep. Not only is this the safest way for her to sleep, but it will also help her become more and more comfortable sleeping in her crib, which will make future bedtimes easier.



On the line below, write down when you will try the ideas above:

ACTION PLAN: Make Baby's Bedtime Safer By Following The ABCs of Safe Sleep

It's great you want to start following **ABCs of Safe** _____ soon. It's such an important way to protect your

Here are three steps you can take over the next week or two to make your baby's sleep as safe as possible. If you can't follow all of these steps right away, start by deciding which of these steps you can follow at your baby's very next bedtime to help her sleep more safely today.

A

Make a plan for putting your baby to sleep *Alone*.

If you have other children or pets that usually sleep next to your baby, think about how you can keep them in their own space. For example, if you have a pet that often jumps in your baby's crib, maybe you can use a baby monitor and keep your baby's bedroom door closed. If your baby has an older sibling who likes to sleep next to her, perhaps you can let the two of them have some extra cuddle time before bed, and then arrange to put them to sleep at separate times to help make the transition easier.

What are some ways you can make it easier on yourself to put your baby to bed by herself? Write an idea or two on the lines below.

How I will make it easier to put my baby to bed by herself: _____

When I will start doing this: _____



B

Put your baby to sleep on her *Back*. Babies sometimes startle more easily when they are laid on their backs to sleep, so plan to take a little extra time putting her to bed. Placing a hand on your baby's tummy or making a shushing sound may help soothe her to sleep.

What are some things you might like to try to help your baby fall asleep on her back? Write them on the lines below.



C

Make sure you put your baby to sleep in a safe *Crib*. Some older cribs may not be safe for your baby. You can check to make sure your baby's crib is still safe by calling the manufacturer (try looking up the phone number on the Internet). If you don't have a crib, a playpen is another safe space where your baby can sleep.

Make sure the Crib is *empty*, except for a fitted sheet. Your baby should sleep without pillows, toys, stuffed animals, crib bumpers, pets, or blankets in her crib. Dress your baby in warm pajamas or a sleeper, and make sure your home is just warm enough that you are comfortable sitting still in regular clothes. If you are comfortable without a blanket, your baby will be, too!

If you don't have a crib, call your health department. There may be a program in your area that can help you get a new, safe crib free or at a low cost. You can also check this resource: www.cribsforkids.org/requestacrib/

Take a look at the checklist below and mark the items off as you make your baby's crib as safe as it can be:

- The crib is free of blankets, bumpers, toys, stuffed animals, pets, and other objects.
- If the crib mattress has a sheet, it's a fitted sheet and doesn't pull off if you tug the corners.
- The crib is new and follows current safety standards.
- The crib is in an area of the house where children and pets can't climb in.

PROTECT YOUR BABY

Even if you can't follow all three steps at your baby's very next bedtime, you can use this plan to start making her sleep safer right away. You have the power to protect your baby while she is asleep!

ACTION PLAN: Overcome Obstacles To Safe Sleep

It sounds like you're concerned about making your baby's sleep safer, and that's great! Even if you aren't ready to follow all the **ABCs of Safe Sleep**, you can start taking small steps to make your baby's sleep safer at every bedtime. Here is a list of common obstacles that may be keeping you from following the **ABCs of Safe Sleep**. If any of these apply to you, check off 1-2 tips that you can try.

I don't have a crib for my baby. *What can I do?*

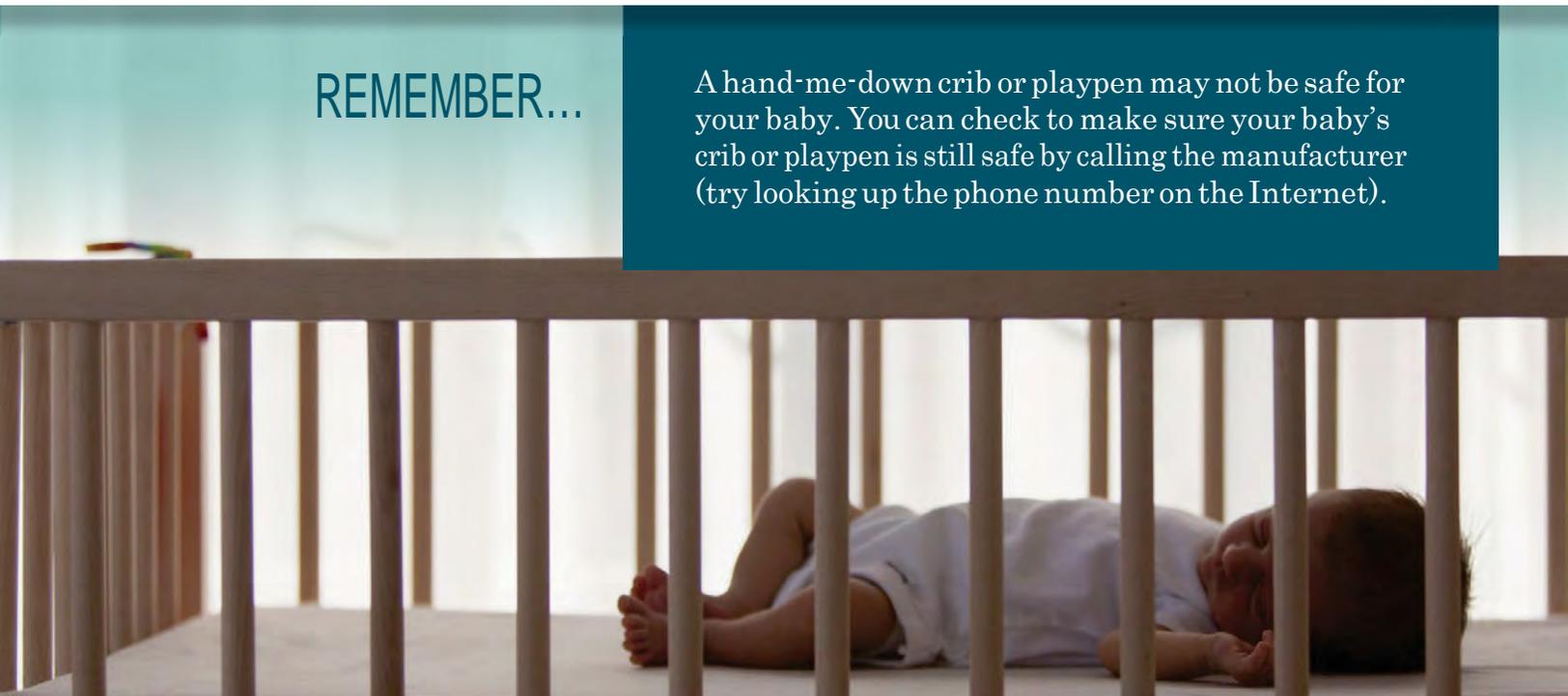
I can...

- Call my local health department.
- Borrow a crib from a friend who doesn't need it right now.
- Ask a friend or family member to help me buy my baby a crib.
- Check www.cribsforkids.org/requestacrib to see if I am eligible to receive a free crib for my baby.

When I will do this: _____

REMEMBER...

A hand-me-down crib or playpen may not be safe for your baby. You can check to make sure your baby's crib or playpen is still safe by calling the manufacturer (try looking up the phone number on the Internet).



I'm still not sure how to make my baby's crib safe. *What can I do?*

Check off any of the following things that you still need to do to make your baby's crib safe, then write down when you will do this on the line below.

I can...

- Make sure to put my baby's crib in a place where children and pets can't climb in
- Buy a sleeper or warm pajamas so my baby won't need a blanket.
- Remove any toys, bumper pads, mattress pads, pillows, or other objects so that my baby's crib is empty except for a tight-fitting sheet.
- Check to make sure that the crib's slats are no farther apart than 2 3/8" to keep my baby's head from becoming trapped.

When I will do this: _____

Making your baby's crib safe is simple: just keep it as empty as possible! The only things that should be in your baby's crib are a mattress, a fitted sheet, and your baby. Remove pillows, toys, pets, bumpers, blankets, and anything else.



I don't know how to help my baby stay asleep without sleeping next to him or putting him on his tummy. *What can I do?*

Check off 1-2 of the following tips that you can try to help your baby fall asleep alone on his back, then write down when you will try them on the line below.

I can...

- Read articles with tips on helping my baby fall asleep and stay asleep (look for them earlier in this lesson).
- Create a soothing routine to help my baby wind down before bedtime.
- Try placing a hand on my baby's tummy or making a shushing sound to help him sleep.
- Watch my baby for signs of sleepiness so that he doesn't get too tired and cranky before bed.
- Plan to take a little extra time getting my baby to bed while he's used to sleeping alone on his back.

When I will do this: _____

REMEMBER...

You can start making small changes today that will help protect your baby. Decide which of these you can start doing right away, and you can make your baby's very next bedtime safer.