



Safe Sleep

in Early Years Settings

Accompanying Professional Workbook

PROTECTING BABIES THROUGH SAFE PRACTICE
AND PROFESSIONAL VIGILANCE



Evidence-based
guidance



Reflect, review
and strengthen
practice



Practical tools,
checklists and
case studies



Every sleep,
every baby,
every time



*Strong practice. Safe sleep.
Better outcomes for every child.*

DEBORAH UDAKIS

BUILDING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDHOODS TOGETHER



Welcome

Thank you for taking part in this webinar.

This workbook has been designed to accompany the session and support you in evaluating and strengthening safe sleep practice within your setting or childminding provision.

The activities encourage professional reflection rather than compliance.

They are intended to help you identify strengths, recognise areas for development and create meaningful actions that will enhance the safety and wellbeing of babies in your care.

The workbook can be completed individually or used as part of staff meetings, supervision, quality assurance visits, and leadership development.

Learning Outcomes

By completing this workbook, you will:

- understand current evidence-based safe sleep guidance
- reflect upon your own professional practice
- evaluate leadership arrangements
- identify improvements to policies and procedures
- prepare confidently for inspection conversations
- strengthen partnership working with parents.

Table of contents

- Safe Sleep Audit
- Sleep Environment Checklist
- Sleep Observation Record
- Practitioner Knowledge Quiz
- Case Studies
- Myth or Fact Activity
- Inspection Questions
- Parent Communication Reflection
- Action Plan
- Leadership Self-Evaluation

Activity 1: Safe Sleep Audit

Rate each statement.

RAG Rating

-  Fully Embedded
-  Partially Embedded
-  Requires Development

Statement	Rating	Evidence
Safe Sleep Policy reflects current guidance		
Staff understand the policy		
New staff receive induction before caring for babies		
Refresher training is provided		
Sleep areas are regularly monitored		
Sleep records are completed consistently		
Parents receive information about safe sleep		
Sleep equipment is checked regularly		
Safe sleep is discussed during supervision		
Leaders carry out observations of practice		
Near misses are reviewed		
Practice is regularly audited		

Reflection

What are your settings three greatest strengths re Safe Sleeping?

What requires immediate attention?

Activity 2: Sleep Environment Checklist

Mattress is firm and flat	
Baby placed on back to sleep	
Head and face remain uncovered	
No duvets	
No soft toys	
No baby nests used for sleep	
Room temperature comfortable	
Sleep checks completed	
Individual care plans followed	
Mattress fits cot correctly	
Feet positioned at foot of cot where appropriate	
No pillows	
No cot bumpers	
No sleep positioners	
Bedding appropriate	
Ventilation appropriate	
Practitioner supervision effective	
Sleep records completed accurately	

Overall Evaluation

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Requires Improvement ☐

Priority Actions

Activity 3

Sleep Observation Record

Observer:

Date:

Time:

Number of babies asleep:

What did I observe?

Environment

Practitioner interactions

Sleep checks

Baby positioning

Communication between staff

Professional judgement demonstrated

Strengths observed

Areas for improvement

Agreed Actions

Action

Person Responsible

Completion Date

Activity 4: Practitioner Knowledge Quiz

Discuss as a team.

Why should babies normally be placed on their backs to sleep?

Why should pillows not be used?

How would you know whether a baby is too warm?

What should you do if a parent requests tummy sleeping?

What should a sleep check include?

What would concern you during a sleep check?

How often should safe sleep knowledge be refreshed?

Who is responsible for safe sleep?

- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Baby Room Leader
- ☐ DSL
- ☐ Everyone

What should you do if you observe unsafe practice?

Why is understanding the evidence as important as knowing the policy?

Activity 5: Case Studies

Case Study One

A parent asks practitioners to place their six-month-old baby on their tummy because "that's the only way he sleeps."

Questions

How would you respond?

How would you maintain a positive relationship?

Would you involve the manager?

What records would you keep?

Notes

Case Study Two

During a learning walk you notice a practitioner has left a comfort blanket covering part of a sleeping baby's face.

What immediate action would you take?

How would you follow this up?

How could this become a learning opportunity?

Notes

Case Study Three

A new practitioner has completed induction but admits they are unsure why babies should sleep on their backs.

What would you do?

How could leaders ensure this knowledge gap is addressed?

Notes

Activity 6: Myth or Fact?

Tick whether each statement is a Myth or Fact.

Statement	Myth	Fact
Babies sleep better on their tummy		
A firm flat mattress is safest		
Cot bumpers make cots safer		
Babies should always be placed on their backs initially		
Sleep positioners reduce risk		
Sleep checks should involve active observation		
Safe sleep is everyone's responsibility		
Parents and providers should work together		
Policies alone keep babies safe		
Safe sleep forms part of safeguarding		

Team Discussion

Which myths have you heard within practice?

Activity 7: Inspection Questions

How would you answer?

Practitioners

How do you know a baby is sleeping safely?

What would concern you during a sleep check?

How do you communicate with parents?

What would you do if another practitioner wasn't following the policy?

Leaders

How do you monitor safe sleep practice?

How do you assure yourself that guidance is consistently implemented?

How is safe sleep included within induction?

How do you monitor compliance?

How do you learn from incidents and near misses?

How do you know your policy is understood?

Activity 8: Parent Communication Reflection

Reflect upon your current practice.

Do parents receive your Safe Sleep Policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you explain the reasons behind your procedures? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would parents understand why certain requests cannot be accommodated?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Could your communication be improved? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How will you strengthen parent partnerships? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Activity 9: Action Plan

Improvement Needed	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Measures

Activity 10: Leadership Self-Evaluation

Reflect honestly on your leadership.

Rate yourself from 1 (Developing) to 5 (Highly Effective)

Leadership Statement	Score
I understand current safe sleep guidance	
Our policy reflects current evidence	
Staff receive effective induction	
Safe sleep is regularly discussed	
I monitor practice routinely	
I challenge unsafe practice confidently	
Staff feel able to raise concerns	
Parents understand our procedures	
We learn from near misses	
Safe sleep forms part of quality assurance	
I could confidently discuss safe sleep during inspection	

Leadership Reflection

What am I most proud of?

What do I need to improve?

What action will I take within the next month?

What action will I complete within the next three months?

My Personal Commitment

Having completed this webinar and workbook, I commit to strengthening safe sleep practice by:

Signature _____

Date _____

Final Reflection

Remember...

Safe sleep is not a policy.

It is not a checklist.

It is not something we think about only when babies are asleep.

Safe sleep is a reflection of our safeguarding culture.

Every sleep.

Every baby.

Every day.

Because every baby deserves to wake up safely.