

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and the Child Care Provider *Setting Policy On Infant Sleep Position*

Sharing Your Policy With Parents

When you interview with parents who are looking for infant care, or begin providing care to a family who has a new baby, tell them about your rules for placing babies to sleep on their backs:

- Put your infant sleep position policy in writing and give a copy to parents. You may want to copy the standards from *Caring for Our Children*. Or you may want to write your own (just be sure to include each of the important points in the standards).
- Begin the conversation by asking about the baby's sleep position at home.
- Tell the parents that you place all babies on their backs to sleep. Explain that this reduces the babies' risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Tell the parents that the American Academy of Pediatrics, the SIDS Alliance, the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs and the National Institutes of Health recommend back sleeping as the safest position for babies.
- Tell them that, even though most babies will be just fine, there is a higher risk of SIDS when an infant is placed to sleep on his stomach or side.
- If the parents have questions about SIDS and infant sleep position, give them a SIDS brochure and/or a "Back to Sleep" brochure or video. Or give them the toll-free telephone numbers for the SIDS Alliance (1-800-221-SIDS) and the national "Back to Sleep" campaign (1-800-505-CRIB). They can call these numbers and have someone who knows about SIDS answer their questions.
- A few babies do have medical conditions that require stomach sleeping. If the family insists that their baby should sleep on his side or stomach, tell them that you will need a note from the baby's doctor saying that this is how the baby should sleep.
- If the parents will not or cannot obtain a doctor's note, and they still insist that their baby sleep on his stomach or side, you might decide not to take care of their child. While it is difficult to lose a client, it is important to stick to your rules – especially rules that affect a child's safety. It is also important that the parents for whom you work respect your rules as a child care professional.
- Remember that, on occasion, you may need to reinforce your rules about sleep position with parents. Do not agree to place a baby to sleep on his stomach "just for a while" because he has a cold, is teething, prefers to sleep on his stomach, etc.

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This series was created by the Infant Mortality Risk Reduction Work Team of the National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center (NSIDPSC). You may copy it with proper credit. The NSIDPSC is a cooperative project of the SIDS Alliance, Inc. and the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Infant Death Program.