



**Reducing the Risk of  
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)  
in African American Communities**

**A Training Guide for a 15-Minute  
Community Education Presentation  
on SIDS**

# Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)



## Goals and Objectives

### Introduction

As a result of this presentation, participants will be prepared to help increase awareness of SIDS in African American communities by talking with others about the impact of SIDS and risk-reduction behaviors.

At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Define Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and understand the impact of SIDS in African American communities.
- ◆ Apply “Back to Sleep” risk-reduction practices and other infant care practices that help reduce the risk of SIDS.
- ◆ Identify ways to increase awareness in their community.
- ◆ Know where and how to find more information and community resources about SIDS.

## Time and Audience Size

This is a **15-minute presentation** that will help you provide a **brief overview** of SIDS, risk-reduction practices, and community resources. Because this is a very brief presentation that doesn’t include audience interaction, you can deliver this presentation to any size group. You will not have time to answer questions during the presentation so, if possible, allow time afterwards for questions.

## Preparation

Prepare for your training session by reviewing and becoming familiar with the packet before presenting the material.

Put together a stapled packet of handouts 1–10 to give to each participant at the beginning of your presentation. These handouts include the major points that will be discussed during your 15-minute presentation. If you have access to an overhead projector, make overhead transparencies of the handouts to use during your presentation. Otherwise, refer to the numbered handouts as you discuss each one.

# Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

(continued)



The other material found in the Resource Kit provides a wealth of additional information about SIDS that can help you prepare for your presentation. The handouts for this 15-minute presentation are based on these other materials. Depending on the group to whom you are presenting, you may want to make copies of some of these materials.

To help you identify local resources, contact the SIDS Alliance, the Association of SIDS organizations and Infant Mortality Programs, and/or the National SIDS and Infant Death Program Support Center. They are listed in the “SIDS Resources” section of this Kit. You might want to prepare a list of SIDS organizations and bereavement services as well as other programs that support family health in your community. Your state or local health department may also be able to provide information on additional community resources.

## Materials

You will need to make copies of the following handouts and information for your presentation. Save the brochures and other resource materials for the end of the session. To order additional brochures, call 1-800-505-CRIB.

- Handout-1 Welcome
- Handout-2 We Will Talk About . . .
- Handout-3 The “Back to Sleep” Campaign
- Handout-4 National Partners
- Handout-5 Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is . . .
- Handout-6 SIDS Facts
- Handout-7 SIDS Myths and Facts
- Handout-8 How to Reduce Your Baby’s Risk
- Handout-9 Help Spread the Word
- Handout-10 Each of Us Can Help
- Brochure: Babies Sleep Safest on Their Backs:  
Reduce the Risk of SIDS
- National Resource List
- Local Resource Lists (instructor to provide)

# Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

(continued)



## The Presentation

“Saving Babies in Our Communities” article

Order Form for Campaign Materials

The essential information in the training curriculum is provided as “Core Content.” Presentation tips contain insight and advice to help you in your presentation. **Bold text** in the Core Content is identical to the text in the handout. This will help you keep your place when you are providing additional information.

# Introductions and Agenda Overview–3 Minutes



## Handouts & Tips

Handout-1 Welcome

Handout-2

We Will Talk About . . .

Handout-3

The “Back to Sleep”  
Campaign

Handout-4

National Partners

Presentation Tip

## Core Content\*

- ◆ Introduce yourself. Explain your role and your organization’s commitment to community education and helping to reduce the risk of SIDS in African American communities.
  - ◆ Review key points you will discuss and the overall goal.
  - ◆ **The “Back to Sleep” campaign is a public health education campaign to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in the U.S.**
  - ◆ **The goal of the campaign is to promote back sleeping as the safest sleep position for infants under 1 year of age.**
  - ◆ These Partner Organizations are committed to helping African American families address a variety of health concerns. Increasing awareness of ways to reduce the risk of SIDS is an important health issue for African American families.
- ☛ Reference the national organizations supporting the initiative in your community.

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\* Bold text in this section is identical to text on handouts.

# What We Know About SIDS—5 Minutes



## Handouts & Tips

### Handout-5 Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Is . . .

### Presentation Tip

### Handout-6 SIDS Facts

### Presentation Tip

### Handout-7 SIDS Myths and Facts

### Presentation Tip

## Core Content

- ◆ SIDS, sometimes called “crib death,” is the number one cause of death in babies between the ages of 1 month and 1 year.
- ◆ Scientists have not yet been able to determine the exact cause of SIDS. In most cases, a diagnosis of SIDS is given after an autopsy, death scene investigation, and review of the infant’s medical history.

☛ As you read the definition of SIDS, acknowledge how difficult SIDS is to understand for all concerned people.

- ◆ We do know that SIDS is not contagious and is not caused by child abuse, neglect, or “shaken baby syndrome.”

☛ Read the “SIDS Facts” handout.

- ◆ Explain that this information has been gathered by scientists, doctors, researchers, and other people who are trying to understand the causes of SIDS.

- ◆ Families really can reduce their babies’ risk of SIDS but not “cure” or “prevent” it.

☛ Read the “SIDS Myths and Facts” handout.

- ◆ The experts who study SIDS are very clear that no one is to blame for a SIDS death, and it cannot be predicted. SIDS can happen to any family no matter their race, ethnicity, income, or where they live.
- ◆ Families around the world, including many African American families, have led the way in trying to find the cause of SIDS. Affected families have encouraged the scientific community to learn as much as possible.



- ◆ Families who have experienced this terrible loss often feel guilty and responsible for their baby's death.

# Reducing Your Baby's Risk—5 Minutes



## Handouts & Tips

### Handout-8 How to Reduce Your Baby's Risk

### Presentation Tip

## Core Content

- ◆ These risk-reduction behaviors are the ideal in terms of reducing SIDS risk. Of course, well-baby care and a smoke-free environment are also important for a baby's good health.

☛ As you discuss each behavior, make sure you provide a full and accurate description of what each behavior means and how to perform it.

- ◆ **Place Your Baby on His or Her Back to Sleep at Nighttime and Naptime.** U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher and the American Academy of Pediatrics say that back sleeping is the safest sleep position.
- ◆ People may be skeptical about changing their current practices because they learned them from people they respect and trust. For example, for years doctors (and many grandparents) recommended putting babies to sleep on their stomachs. However, based on the study of thousands of SIDS deaths, we know that back sleeping and these other risk-reduction behaviors can help save infant lives.
- ◆ The earlier you put your baby on his or her back to sleep, the more quickly the baby gets used to this position.
- ◆ If your baby cannot sleep on his or her back, discuss other sleep options with your doctor or health care provider.
- ◆ Placing babies to sleep on their backs is the *single most important* thing to do to reduce SIDS risk.
- ◆ **Place Your Baby on a Firm Mattress, Such as in a Safety-Approved Crib.** Your baby is safest on a firm surface. Do not place your baby on a soft mattress, sofa, cushion, waterbed, sheepskin, or other soft surface.





## Presentation Tip

☛ For more information on safety-approved cribs, refer the audience to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Consumer Hotline: 1-800-638-2772.

- ◆ Some families may not have the money to buy safety-approved cribs. You can still create a safe, firm surface for your baby by eliminating soft, fluffy items from bassinets, cradles, and other sleep areas.
- ◆ Bedsharing poses risks for infants' safety. They can get trapped between the mattress and the structure of the bed or covered by an adult's blankets and pillows. If you choose to have your baby sleep in your bed, make sure you follow all of the risk-reduction recommendations, especially the back sleep position, for safe sleeping.
- ◆ **Remove All Fluffy and Loose Bedding from the Sleep Area.** Make sure that all pillows, quilts, stuffed toys, and other soft items are taken out of the crib and other sleep areas.
- ◆ Some parents may have emotional attachments to a handmade quilt, special toy, or clothing given to them by a cherished friend or family member. Create a safer environment by using these special gifts at times other than sleep time.
- ◆ **Make Sure Your Baby's Head and Face Stay Uncovered During Sleep.** If possible, use only sleep clothing with no other covering for your baby. This keeps the baby's nose and mouth clear during sleep.
- ◆ If you choose to use a blanket, make sure the baby's feet are at the foot of the crib, the blanket is no higher than the baby's chest, and the blanket is tucked in around the mattress, so the baby's head can't get covered by the blanket.
- ◆ Some infants who have died have been found with soft coverings over their nose and mouth at the time of death.



- ◆ **Don't Smoke Before or After the Birth of Your Baby.** Your baby will be safest if you make sure no one smokes around your baby. Studies have shown an increased risk of SIDS in babies whose mothers smoke.
- ◆ **Don't Let Your Baby Get Too Warm During Sleep.** Babies need to be warm, but not too warm, during sleep. Make sure the baby's room temperature and clothing are the same as what makes you comfortable. Just like you, too many layers of clothing or blankets can overheat the baby and make the baby uncomfortable.
- ◆ Some people fear that babies are more affected by the cold than adults. They may overdress or cover babies in cold weather. But babies are not more sensitive to cold and should not be overdressed.
- ◆ **Make sure you follow all of these risk-reduction recommendations if you have your baby sleep in your bed.**
- ◆ **Finally, remember that most babies are born healthy and stay that way as they grow. Using these risk-reduction practices helps reduce your concern about SIDS so you and your family can enjoy your new baby!**
- ◆ SIDS risk-reduction education is not intended to cause greater fear for babies' health, but rather to inform families of the things they can do to help them feel more comfortable and secure about their baby's health.

## Presentation Tips

☛ Hold up and show your audience the “Babies Sleep Safest on Their Backs” brochure as a good summary of all the information you've presented.

☛ If you were not able to give everyone a copy of the brochure, refer the audience to the toll-free “Back to Sleep” ordering line: 1-800-505-CRIB.



## Handouts & Tips

Handout-9  
Help Spread the Word

Presentation Tip

Handout-10  
Each of Us Can Help

## Core Content

- ◆ Anyone who is involved in the day-to-day care of infants should be aware of back sleeping.
- ◆ Review the list of people that your audience can talk with to help spread the word.
- ◆ Unfortunately, babies in the African American community continue to die of SIDS more often than do white babies. An African American baby is currently 2 times more likely to die of SIDS than a white baby.
- ◆ Remember, no one is to blame for SIDS deaths, but with increased community awareness, the risk of SIDS can be reduced for our generation and future generations.
- ◆ When we understand the serious nature of the SIDS problem in our community, each of us can become a valuable community resource.
- ◆ **First, Talk About SIDS. Help Increase Community Awareness.** Many people don't understand that SIDS affects the African American community in significant numbers. By discussing the problem with neighbors, childcare providers, health care workers, family members, and others, we can help increase community understanding.
- ◆ **Then, Talk About Risk Reduction. Share New Ways to Reduce the Risk.** The tragic experiences of thousands of families have brought about increased awareness about SIDS and the ways we can reduce the chances that our babies will die of SIDS. We can learn from these tragedies and share information on risk reduction with those in our community.
- ◆ **And, for additional information on SIDS and the "Back to Sleep" campaign, call the toll-free ordering line at 1-800-505-CRIB.**



## Presentation Tips

☛ Remind your audience that back sleeping is the single most important way to reduce SIDS risk.

☛ If possible, invite your audience to ask you questions after your presentation.

# Welcome



## Sudden Infant Death Syndrome—SIDS

Reducing the Risk in  
African American Communities

# We Will Talk About . . .



- ◆ What We Know About SIDS
- ◆ Reducing Our Babies' Risks
- ◆ Resources for Families and the Community

## Our Goal . . .

Each participant will be prepared to help increase awareness of SIDS by talking with others about the impact of SIDS and risk-reduction behaviors.

# The “Back to Sleep” Campaign



- ◆ The “Back to Sleep” campaign is a public health education campaign to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in the U.S.
- ◆ The goal of the campaign is to promote back sleeping as the safest sleep position for infants under 1 year of age.

# National Partners



- ◆ Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- ◆ American Academy of Pediatrics
- ◆ Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs
- ◆ Chi Eta Phi Sorority
- ◆ Chicago Department of Public Health
- ◆ Congress of National Black Churches
- ◆ D.C. Department of Health
- ◆ Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- ◆ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- ◆ National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters
- ◆ National Black Child Development Institute
- ◆ National Coalition of 100 Black Women
- ◆ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- ◆ National Medical Association
- ◆ Pampers Parenting Institute
- ◆ SIDS Alliance
- ◆ Zeta Phi Beta Sorority



# Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is ...



The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under 1 year of age for which no exact cause of death can be determined.

# SIDS Facts



- ◆ SIDS is the leading cause of death in babies between 1 month and 1 year of age.
- ◆ Most SIDS deaths occur in babies who are between 2 and 4 months old.
- ◆ Cribs do not cause SIDS, also called “crib death.”
- ◆ Currently, fewer than 3,000 SIDS deaths occur in the U.S. each year. Before the recommendation to place babies on their backs to sleep, over 5,000 babies died each year.
- ◆ More SIDS deaths occur in colder months.
- ◆ Babies placed to sleep on their stomachs are much more likely to die of SIDS than babies placed to sleep on their backs.
- ◆ SIDS occurs without warning—currently there is no way to tell in advance which babies will die.
- ◆ The number of African American babies dying from SIDS has decreased in recent years. However, African American babies are twice as likely to die from SIDS as white babies.

# SIDS Myths and Facts



## Myths

SIDS is not . . .

- ◆ Caused by vaccines or immunizations.
- ◆ “Caught” or contagious.
- ◆ Caused by child abuse or neglect.

## Facts

Remember that . . .

- ◆ Cribs do not cause SIDS, also called “crib death.”
- ◆ SIDS is currently unpredictable, but the risk can be reduced.
- ◆ SIDS is sudden and silent—the infant appears to be healthy prior to death.
- ◆ A SIDS death occurs quickly during sleep with no signs of suffering.

# How to Reduce Your Baby's Risk



- ◆ Place your baby on his or her back to sleep at nighttime and naptime.
- ◆ Place your baby on a firm mattress, such as in a safety-approved crib.
- ◆ Remove all fluffy and loose bedding from the sleep area.
- ◆ Make sure your baby's head and face stay uncovered during sleep.
- ◆ Don't smoke before or after the birth of your baby.
- ◆ Don't let your baby get too warm during sleep.
- ◆ Make sure you follow all of these risk-reduction recommendations if you have your baby sleep in your bed.

Finally, remember that most babies are born healthy and stay that way as they grow. Using these risk-reduction practices helps reduce your concern about SIDS so you and your family can enjoy your new baby!

# Help Spread the Word



## Talk to . . .

- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Grandparents
- ◆ Aunts and Uncles
- ◆ Siblings
- ◆ Childcare Providers
- ◆ Health Care Providers
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ Clergy
- ◆ Foster Parents

. . . and everyone in the community concerned about the health and well-being of our babies.

# Each of Us Can Help



- ◆ First, talk about SIDS.  
Help increase community awareness.
- ◆ Then, talk about risk reduction.  
Share new ways to reduce the risk.
- ◆ And, for additional information on SIDS and the “Back to Sleep” campaign, call the toll-free ordering line at 1-800-505-CRIB.