

Safer Sleep

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Thames Valley
and South Central
Early Years

Stronger practice hub

Aims and Objectives

- Why safe sleep is everyone's business
- Themes
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- SIDS in numbers
- Factors to lower the risk
- DfE Safer Sleep Guidance
- What does the guidance actually say?
- Sleeping while travelling
- Weather and temperature
- Slings
- Co-sleeping
- Thinking ahead... preparing parents
- BSS Numbers



Why safe sleep is everyone's business

- Reduce avoidable deaths
- To ensure safety advice and consistent, evidence based messages are followed
- Safeguarding Case Reviews



Themes

- Unsafe sleep position
- Co sleeping with an adult, or sibling
- Temporary housing
- A parent smoking
- Drug/alcohol known use by a parent (also in pregnancy)
- Low birth weight
- History of domestic abuse
- Poverty, low income, fuel poverty
- Pets sleeping in the bed
- Parent's mental health
- Incorrect bed/equipment/environment
- Known to Children's Social Care

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

- Peaks at 2 months
- More prevalent in male infants
- More prevalent in lower socio economic groups
- Strongly associated with parental smoking/alcohol use
- Strongly associated with low birthweight and prematurity
- Correlation with younger maternal age, greater number of previous births and is increased in multiple births (twins, triplets etc)

SIDS in numbers (1)

- 1 per 3,817 Current unexplained infant death rate in the UK for live births
- 182 Approximate number of babies dying from SIDS every year in the UK
- Sharing a room with your baby lowers the risk of SIDS by 50%
- An infant placed on their front is up to 6 times more at risk of SIDS
- Around 89% of SIDS happen in the first six months of life
- SIDS has reduced by 81% since the Back to Sleep campaign in 1991

SIDS in numbers (2)

- Low birthweight babies are 5 times more at risk of SIDS
- Sleeping on a sofa with a baby can increase the risk of SIDS by up to 50 times
- Boys are more at risk of SIDS, 63% of unexplained infant deaths in 2021 were boys
- In 2021, the rate of SIDS was almost 4 times higher in mums under 20
- Over a third of SIDS deaths could be avoided if no women smoked during pregnancy

Factors to lower the risk

- Always put a baby on their back for every sleep
- In a clear, flat, separate sleep space
- Keep them smoke free, day and night
- Babies need a sober carer to respond to their needs
- Any amount of breastfeeding lowers the risk of SIDS



The DfE Sleep Guidance

- The guidance is part of the overall changes to Safeguarding in EYFS, which started with the Nutrition Guidance and Safer Recruitment in September 2025
- It follows the NHS/Lullaby Trust guidelines and will be part of the statutory framework from September 2026, however, all early years settings are expected to already be working in line with the guidance

What Does the Guidance Actually Say?

- Babies under 12 months must only be placed to sleep in a cot - this can include a carrycot/Moses basket/travel cot (check that it and the mattress meet the BS numbers)
The DfE defines cots as 'a cot, travel cot, carry cot, or Moses basket)
- Do not use pods, or nests
- Babies and children are placed on their back to sleep
- Babies and children must have their own, separate sleep space
- Sleep spaces must be a clear, flat, firm surface, such as a cot, or suitable mattress on the floor
- Sleep spaces should only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding, which is firmly tucked in around the child, below shoulder height, to prevent head covering. A well fitting sleep bag may be used

What Does the Guidance Actually Say? *continued*

- If blankets are used, the baby must be placed feet to foot, at the bottom of the cot and blanket firmly, tucked in. Cellular blankets are recommended, as they provide temperature control, to prevent over heating
- There should be no additional items in the sleep space, such as toys, pillows, loose bedding, bumpers, wedges, or straps
- The temperature should be between 16-20c (for babies under 12 months)
- Babies and children's heads should never be covered
- Babies under 6 months must have an adult in the room with them for every sleep
- Sleeping children should be checked 'frequently' (every 10-15 minutes)

What Does the Guidance Actually Say? *continued*

- Children should be within sight and sound of an adult when sleeping (this can be via a monitor for babies over 6 months)
- To check if a baby is too hot, or cold, feel their chest, or the back of their neck. Hands and feet are usually cooler. If a child feels clammy, or sweaty, remove a layer of clothing, or bedding
- During extreme temperatures, adults should use their professional judgement
- Once babies are able to roll over, they can be allowed to do so, but should be monitored and always be placed on their back to go to sleep

What Does the Guidance Actually Say? *continued*

- If a cot sheet is used, it must be securely tucked in around the mattress. A fitted sheet is preferable, because there is less risk of it becoming untucked and covering the face/head of the baby
- Comforters can be used for children over 12 months
- Dummies can be used and the Lullaby Trust has guidance on safe dummy use. Do not use dummy clips/ribbons
- The Lullaby Trust has guidance on how to use slings and carriers safely a baby falls asleep in one whilst you are out. They must be transferred to their sleep space on return to the setting



Sleeping while travelling (1)



- A baby under 12 months, should be transferred to their cot, when they return to the setting
- A child over 12 months, where possible, should be transferred to their sleep space, on return to the setting
- A buggy/pram/car seat should not be used as their main sleep space
- A child who has fallen asleep in the car, must be transferred to their sleep space on return
- If a child falls asleep whilst out, remove hats and anything around the neck
- Babies should never sleep in direct sunlight



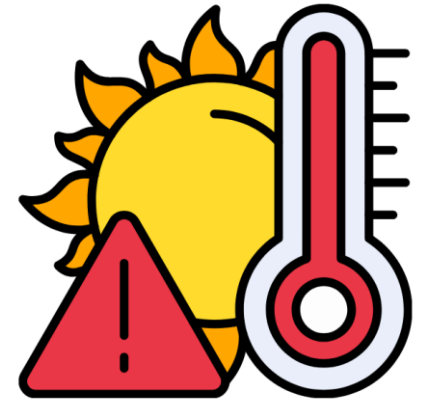
Sleeping while travelling (2)



- When returning to the setting and transferring a baby, or child to their safe sleep space, coats, hats and blankets should be adjusted immediately, to prevent over heating
- If on a longer journey, frequently stops are necessary, to allow babies to stretch:
 - Babies under 6 weeks - every 30 minutes
 - Babies over 6 weeks - every hour
- If a baby is slumped forward, stop and take out of seat as soon as safe to do so
- Please ensure car seats are fitted properly



Weather and Temperature



- A travel cot mattress should be firm and flat, with a waterproof cover
- Don't be tempted to add extra padding, folded blankets, or quilts
- Place the cot away from radiators and direct sunlight
- Keep it out of reach of blind cords and hazards
- Keep the room at 16-20c
- If the room is difficult to cool, use lighter bedding/clothing. Open the door/window, if safe to do so
- If using a sleep bag, check the guidance what tog to use
- In really warm weather, just a nappy is fine
- You can use a fan, but don't aim directly on the baby
- In winter, don't be tempted to wrap babies up. Research has shown that babies are safer when they're a little cooler, rather than too hot



Slings



When using a sling, or baby carrier, remember the **TICKS** guidelines:

- Tight
- In view at all times
- Close enough to kiss
- Keep chin off chest
- Supported back

The safest baby carrier to use will keep the infant firmly in an upright position, where the adult can always see their babies face and ensure their airways are free

Co-Sleeping

Some parents choose to share a bed with their baby. You should not share a bed with your baby if:

- You have recently drunk any alcohol
- You, or anyone in the bed smokes, or the baby was exposed to smoking in pregnancy
- You have taken any drugs that make you feel sleepy, or less aware
- Your baby was born prematurely
- Sofas and armchairs are dangerous places to fall asleep with your baby. If you feel you might fall asleep, put your baby in a safer sleep space



Things to remember if bed sharing

- Check that baby can't become wedged, trapped, or fall out of bed
- Never leave a baby alone in an adult bed
- Keep pets and other children away from sharing the bed
- Keep pillows and adult bedding away from a baby



Thinking ahead - preparing parents

- Some children/babies may come to the setting using comforters, toys etc to help them sleep
- It would be helpful to share/explain the guidance to parents before the child starts in your setting
- Share information about safer sleep and explain that it is a statutory requirement, which you have to follow
- They may be able to start transitioning their baby to safer practices before they start, making your job easier and the baby's transition smoother



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.



<https://www.tommeequippee.com/en-gb/shop/grobags>

Tommee Tippee confirms that Grobag® baby sleep bags are tested to and comply with BS EN 16781:2018.



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.



<https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/products/furniture/cots-coracles-and-sleep-mats/coracles/dream-coracle?v=G961>

Dream Coracle – Community Playthings

This is currently the only coracle-style unit marketed to early years settings where the manufacturer explicitly states compliance with identifiable British Safety Standards in publicly available documentation.

What the manufacturer confirms:

- Independently tested and certified to:
 - BS 8509
 - BS EN 716-1:2017 (children's cots)
 - BS EN 1466:2023 (carrycots)
 - BS EN 1130:2019 (cribs)
- Mattress conforms to:
 - BS EN 16890:2017+A1:2021
 - BS 7177:2008+A1:2011 (Medium Hazard)



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.

<https://www.veganmattress.co.uk/products/vegan-cot-cot-bed-mattresses>



Cottonsafe® Vegan Cot Mattress (UK)
Cottonsafe explicitly states that their cot and cot-bed mattresses comply with **BS 7177:2008 + A1:2011**, alongside the relevant European cot-mattress safety standard **BS EN 16890:2017**.



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.

<https://www.snuz.co.uk/products/snuzbasket-barley-moses-basket>



Snuz SnuzBasket Moses Basket
Standard met: BS EN 1466:2023
•The product page explicitly states “Safety tested & certified to BS EN 1466:2023”.
•This is the latest Moses basket and carry cot safety standard.



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.

silvercrossbaby.com/collections/accessories



Silver Cross DUNE First Bed Folding Carrycot Standard met: BS EN 1466:2023

- Silver Cross states in the official instruction manual that this carrycot “**complies with EN 1466:2023**”.
- EN 1466:2023 is the **current** UK standard for carry cots used for sleeping.



Examples of safe sleep
spaces which meet the
relevant BSS numbers.

<https://www.argos.co.uk/product/5588699>



Joie Allura Travel Cot (with bassinet)
Standard met: BS EN 716-1:2017
•The manufacturer's instruction manual states the Joie Allura travel cot is "approved to European safety standards EN 716-1:2017+AC:2019".
•This explicitly covers folding and travel cots.J



Examples of safe sleep spaces which meet the relevant BSS numbers.



- <https://www.ikea.com/nl/en/p/sniglar-cot-beech-30248537/>

KEA SNIGLAR Cot (60 x 120 cm)

Standard met: BS EN 716-1:2017

•IKEA explicitly states that the SNIGLAR cot "Complies with European standard EN 716-1", which in the UK is the designated BS EN 716-1:2017 cot safety standard.

•This standard applies to domestic fixed cots.

Questions and Final Thoughts

Thank you for attending

Any further questions please email Paula at:

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