**Safer Sleeping Guidance**

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| When considering the matching needs of a baby with that of approved foster carers, there is a duty to consider the skills, abilities and experience of the foster carer to safely care for a baby. Skills and training records of the carer(s) may affect the decision to place. |
| The service is committed to placing baby in a safe environment. Therefore all carers must evidence in their safe caring policy the actions they would take to reduce any risk highlighted from the specific risk assessment of the placement in the event of a Parent and Child being considered. |
| This policy draws on information and guidelines from the Department of Health and The Lullaby Trust. The information was correct at the time of publishing but does change with research and learning. Whilst the policy will be periodically reviewed, and updated as required, carers and parents should seek advice from their health visitor/GP and view information available on the websites below alongside this policy. |
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| **Website Details:** |
| <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome/Pages/Introduction.aspx> |
| <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/> |
| Babies have died as a result of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)** |
| **In order to minimise the risk:** |
| * Carer/parent needs to ensure that babies always sleep in their own cot and not in a bed with anyone else. |
| * After feeding in the night babies must be put back into their cots in the safe sleeping position described within this guidance. |
| * Carer/parent need to check during the night that baby is sleeping safely. Carers can enter the placement bedroom without knocking if they feel it is appropriate and necessary. |
| **Cot Mattress** |
| * Mattress should conform to safety standards – mattresses should carry the BSI number **BS 1877-10: 1997** |
| * The use of a **new** cot mattress is always recommended. The cot mattress should be firm, with no sagging and fit the cot snugly, with no gaps. |

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| * The mattress needs to be kept as clean and hygienic as possible. It can be either one with a wipe-clean covering or a removable top panel that can be washed at a high temperature. Alternatively, a washable mattress protector can be used, which covers the mattress to stop it getting wet if the baby dribbles or their nappy leaks. |
| * Choose a mattress that feels firm rather than soft. Babies need support while sleeping. It should be no thinner than 10cm. |
| **Where to place the cot** |
| Babies are less able to control their temperature, so the cot shouldn’t be near a radiator or sunny window.  Blind cords are also a risk, as babies have been known to become entangled with these and strangled. These should be tied up or secured with specialist ties and not left hanging |
| **Inside the cot** |
| The inside of baby’s cot should be as clutter free as possible. Pillows and duvets aren’t safe for babies younger than one year old due to the risk of suffocation. Duvets can also make the baby too hot. |
| Cot bumpers can also trap heat in the cot and could be used to climb on when your baby becomes more mobile, so these are not allowed. |
| **Keep baby safe in the cot** |
| Even when the baby is tucked up in the cot, there are things to be aware of: |
| * The safest place for baby to sleep in the first six months is in a cot or Moses basket in a room with an adult. |
| * A baby monitor is required in any room where a baby is sleeping unattended. |
| * Babies should be put to sleep on their back, with feet at the foot of the crib, cot or pram (feet to foot). This helps to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). |
| * Don’t use pillows and duvets – they are not safe for babies who are less than a year old due to the risk of suffocation. Duvets can also make the baby too hot. Quilted sleeping bags and baby nests are also not suitable to sleep in when unattended because of the danger of suffocation. When not attended, the drop side of the cot should be up and securely locked. |

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| * Position the cot out of direct sunshine, away from windows, radiators and lamps. This will help to maintain a safe and comfortable temperature. |
| * Move furniture away from the cot, so that as the baby grows they can’t easily climb out of the cot. |
| * Try not to opt for cords for the curtains or blinds in baby’s room. Dangling cords carry a risk of strangulation. If you already have them, make sure you firmly tie up cords so they are well out of reach on a cleat. |
| * Once baby can sit up, remove mobiles and toys that rest across the cot. |
| * When the cot mattress is at its lowest height and the top rail is below your child’s chest it is time to move him to a bed. |
| **Babies should always sleep on their backs** |
| * Many babies can roll from their sides onto their tummies, so they should not be put to sleep on their sides. |
| * Put the baby’s feet at the bottom of the cot and cover so that they cannot wriggle under the bedding. |
| * Make up the cot so that the bedclothes just come up to baby’s shoulders and the baby’s head cannot go down under the bedclothes. |
| **Temperature for baby’s room** |
| Help baby to sleep safe and sound by keeping his room between 16 degrees C and 20 degrees C. A baby who gets too hot is more vulnerable to SIDS. |
| Follow these tips to keep baby at a safe temperature: |
| * A room thermometer needs to be used for baby’s bedroom to make sure that it is always at the right temperature. |
| * Make sure the baby’s home is a smoke-free zone. All foster homes where any child under 5 years old is placed, has to be a non-smoking household. |
| * Don’t cover the baby with too much bedding or wrap them in lots of clothes. As a rule of thumb, don’t use more than you would use yourself. . |
| * Do not put a hot water bottle or electric blanket in baby’s cot however cold the weather is. |
| * Keep baby’s cot away from radiators and heaters. |
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| * If you think baby is getting too hot, check their tummy. If it feels hot or is sweaty, remove some layers. It is normal for baby’s hands and feet to feel cool, though. |
| * On warm days keep baby cool by closing the curtains and opening the window. In really hot weather, sponge baby gently with tepid water. |
| * In exceptionally warm weather, a small electric fan may help to cool baby’s room, but make sure it is placed well away from the cot. So it can’t be reached. |
| **Additional measures required to ensure safe sleeping** |
| * Babies should never wear hats in bed as they may overheat. |
| * Baby must never be left alone when feeding; this could result in the baby choking. |
| * Never fall asleep with a baby on a sofa or armchair, you could suffocate the baby. |
| * Never allow anyone to smoke near baby. Babies need a smoke free environment – smoke is toxic. |
| * Never allow anyone to consume alcohol near the baby. |
| * No pet should ever be left in a room with baby alone. Pets may jump into the cot/Moses basket and can suffocate baby. No baby should ever be left unsupervised with any pet at any time. |
| * Babies should never sleep with other children. |
| * Babies should not be allowed to sleep in car seats on the floor as the baby’s airway can become blocked. They must be placed in the safe sleeping position in their cot whenever possible. |
| * Soft baby slings are not allowed as babies have suffocated whilst sleeping in these. |
| **Please note: Guidance can change and while this was drawn up using current information, carers and parents should consult the websites referred to and seek advice from their health visitor/GP.** |

**VERSION CONTROL**

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