

# Quality Conversations about Safer Sleep

## Key safer sleep messages:

- Put babies on their back for every sleep
- Babies should sleep in a clear, flat sleep space
- Keep babies smoke free day and night
- Do not sleep with your baby on a sofa or chair

The goal is to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by sharing information, answering questions/concerns, sharing resources, and offering support.

Try to use open ended questions to support an open and honest conversation. By actively encouraging discussion, rather than closed questions (and yes/no answers), you can get a better indication of parental understanding about the topic.

## Example of open-ended questions to talk about safer sleep

- What have you heard about ways to keep your baby safe whilst sleeping?
- Please can you show me where baby sleeps during the day and night.
- Show me how you put your baby to sleep.
- Have you got any worries or questions about how and where your baby should sleep?
- If you or your partner are exhausted, would you do anything different?
- If baby is unwell, would you do anything different?
- What do others, who will care for your baby, know about safe sleep? It is important for everyone who cares for your baby to always follow safe sleep practices (day and night). How do you feel about talking to them about this?
- What makes it hard for you to follow the safer sleep advice?
- Can I share with you some ideas about how to breastfeed whilst following safer sleep recommendations?
- Does your baby ever end up in bed with you?

The [Keeping Babies Safe Strategy](#) – The Three Steps for Baby Safety will provide additional information

The [Lullaby Trust](#) is an excellent resource to us with families to support these quality conversations and to work with families with additional needs

[Little Lullaby](#) is an online forum for young parents

Remember the [Keeping Babies Safe Champions](#) who can support you with any queries you may have



Scan here for  
more information



Consider the information below when having your conversation about safer sleep. This could form part of your assessment and needs to be recorded in your records.

- See where baby sleeps day and night.
- Always place baby on their back to sleep.
- Keep baby smoke free during pregnancy and after birth. (If there are any household smokers, discuss the risks and inform about cessation services).
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of cot death.
- The safest place for baby to sleep is in a cot or Moses basket.
- For the first 6 months babies should sleep in the same room as parent/carer (day and night).
- The mattress should be firm, flat, well fitting, waterproof and in good condition.
- Make sure that baby's face or head can't get covered whilst sleeping- keep baby feet to foot, with blankets tucked in and no loose bedding, keep pillows, duvets, thick heavy bedding, wedges, straps, cot bumpers and soft toys out of baby's cot.
- Don't let baby get too hot, baby should not be overdressed or have too much bedding and the room temperature should be 16-20°C.
- Don't use soft beds, pods/nests, head shapers, bean bags, hammocks, sleep positioners and sagging mattresses.
- Discuss bed-sharing, **complete bed-sharing assessment** and inform parents/carer it is useful to think about, and risk assess each sleep episode.
- Discuss the use of car seats.
- Discuss and advise of what to do if baby is unwell.
- Discuss the risks of alcohol, substances/medication.
- Consider potential for "out of routine" sleep situations.

## Quick considerations and actions:

**If you have identified any risk factors or concerns, please consider contacting the family Health Visitor**

- Would the family benefit from additional support or an Early Help Assessment?
- Have you shared and explained the checklist for co sleeping/ bedsharing with the family?
- Have you seen where the baby sleeps during the day and at night?
- Is there any action you need to take to support the parents to ensure the baby has a safe sleep space?