



## **I care for infants in a child care setting. What should I know?**

### **Keep babies on their backs.**

- Studies have shown that 20-40% of SIDS deaths occur in child care settings.
- Only 25% of childcare providers in recent surveys knew how to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- The risk of SIDS is 18 times higher when a baby is used to sleeping on his back and someone else caring for him places him on his tummy. *(Dr. Bradley Thach et al., Washington University, St. Louis, 1999).*
- Many SIDS deaths occur during the first day or two in childcare.
- The peak risk period for SIDS is between one and four months old. Do not place infants on their backs and then switch to tummy-down sleeping during this critical time or at any other time. *(Boston University School of Medicine study, 1998).*
- Once babies can easily roll over and back, usually around 5-7 months, they will choose their own sleep position. But keep placing them on their backs when you put them down for a nap.

### **Keep babies cool and comfy during sleep.**

- If a baby is sweating, she is too hot. Overheating has been found to be a proven risk factor for SIDS.
- For the first few months, babies can't control their internal "thermostats," and many babies who died of SIDS were found with their heads or faces covered: 16-28% in the US and 13-48% in other countries. Some researchers suggest that covering the head might raise the temperature of a baby's brain to deadly levels. *(Dr. Peter Fleming, US Consumer Product Safety Commission Roundtable, December 1998).*

- Don't put a hat on a baby when he is sleeping.
- If you use a thin blanket, tuck it firmly under the mattress so it comes up only to his chest, leaving his arms free. Or, use a lightweight sleeper so there is no need for a blanket.
- Babies don't need any more clothing layers on them than you do.

### **Make sure the crib is safe.**

- The safest place for a baby to sleep is in a crib with a firm mattress.
- A new or used crib should have no missing or broken hardware, slats no more than 2-3/8" apart, no corner posts over 1/16" high, and no cutout designs in the headboard or footboard.
- There should be no soft bedding or anything "pillow-like" near the baby while he sleeps.
- There has been no research on bumper pads. The Danny Foundation, which promotes safe crib use, is keeping a close watch on this issue. They say that bumpers are not needed at all if a crib meets safety standards. But they also know that most caregivers are going to use them.
- In the booklet, *The Safe Nursery*, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission says, "bumper pads, if used, should fit around the entire crib, tie or snap into place and have straps or ties at least in each corner, in the middle of each long side, and on both the top and the bottom edges. Trim the ends close after tying."
- If you use bumpers, remove them when the baby can pull up to a standing position, so he will not use them to try to climb out of the crib.