



September 25, 2025

Dear Provider:

This letter is being shared to remind you of the critical importance of safe sleep practices in child care programs. It contains updates on initiatives, training, and resources from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and Department of Health (DOH). Please read this information carefully and share it with your staff.

Did you know that each year in New York State, more than 120 infants die of sleep-related infant deaths? The way to put an infant to rest is by following the **ABCs of Safe Sleep**. This means babies should always sleep **Alone** on their **Back**, in a **Crib**, and in a **Smoke-free** environment. This simple guideline helps reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related dangers.

NYS Child Day Care Regulations require programs to follow safe sleep guidelines. The individual modality regulations contain the requirements of sleeping and napping in facility and home-based programs. (Day Care Centers regulations, click [here](#)) (Group Family Day Care regulations, click [here](#)) (Family Day Care regulations, click [here](#)) (Legally Exempt regulations, click [Here](#))

ABCs of Safe Sleep

The NYSDOH expanded the ABCs of Safe Sleep to include an important fourth component: **S for Smoke-Free Home**. This update was part of a safe sleep campaign aimed at reducing infant mortality rates. When followed, these practices significantly reduce the risk of sleep-related infant death.

All infants under 12 months of age must always be placed to sleep following the ABCs of Safe Sleep.



Alone – Babies should sleep alone in their crib or pack and play, **without** pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, bumpers, wedges, or infant positioners.

Back – Put baby to sleep on their back, not on their stomach or side, even if baby was born early (premature).

Crib – A firm, clean crib, cot, bed, or washable pack and play that is age-appropriate size must be provided for all children requiring a rest period. If baby falls asleep on a bed, couch, armchair, or in a sling, swing, or other carrier, move the baby to a crib to continue sleeping. **DO NOT use a drop-side crib**. Federal safety standards no longer allow drop-side rail cribs to be made or sold.

Smoke-Free Home – Smoking is prohibited in indoor or outdoor areas used by children, or in vehicles when children are present.

Training Opportunities

A new virtual training launched in June on the importance of safe sleep practices. The training is titled “*Do You know Why? Safe Sleep.*” The course explores the importance of safe sleep and shares valuable information you can use to create safe environments for the children in your care. [Click here](#) to visit the Early Childhood Education and Training Program (ECETP) website and **register for the next training on Monday, October 27th from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.**



As a reminder, virtual training covering a variety of topics is always available to you at no cost. Visit the [ECETP website](#) to register.

Resources for Providers

- OCFS recently developed and distributed Sleeping and Napping Agreement forms for center and home-based programs. [Click here](#) to access and print the forms in English or Spanish.
- Visit [OCFS' Safe Sleep webpage](#) for more information, strategies, and publications.
- The NYS DOH offers free educational materials including posters, brochures, magnets, mirror clings, crib cards, and videos (available in English and other languages). [Click here](#) to explore and place an order.
- [Click here](#) for additional OCFS Child Safety Resources, including *New York Loves Safe Babies*, *Helpful Tips to Keep Your Baby Safe: SIDS, Personalized Safety Tips and Emergency Contact Sheet for Caregivers*, and *What Does a Safe Sleep Environment Look Like?*
- The [HEARS Family Line](#) assists parents and families by providing resources and referrals to a variety of services. Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to help navigate available supports. They can be reached by calling 1-888-55HEARS. The line offers messages in 12 languages.

We also encourage you to share these valuable resources with your staff and families.

Thank you for your continued commitment to following the ABCs of Safe Sleep. If you need help understanding these guidelines, please reach out to your regulator.

Sincerely,



Nora Yates
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services