

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

Safe Infant Sleep Campaigns in Military Populations: Rapid Literature Review

Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team

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Introduction

The Technical Assistance team at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse) conducted a search for case studies that demonstrate successful safe infant sleep campaigns in military communities as requested by a faculty member at Uniformed Services University. Search terms included variations of the following: *safe infant sleep, safe to sleep, sleep campaigns, sleep initiatives, SIDS, SUID*; and *military, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force*.

This report provides:

- data on sleep-related infant deaths;
- trends in the effectiveness of interventions targeting caregivers, health care providers, and hospitals;
- a brief description of identified military and national safe sleep campaigns,
- Clearinghouse resources; and
- additional resources available to assist with implementing a safe infant sleep campaign in a military community.

Please note that these findings provide a brief overview of the topic as of the request date but do not serve as a comprehensive review of all campaigns implemented across the nation. Further, due to the lack of research available, the Clearinghouse cannot state whether or not the campaigns conducted in military communities have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness.

Background

SUID and SIDS Data

Sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) is a term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby less than 1 year old in which the cause was not obvious before investigation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). SIDS is a subcategory of SUID and is a cause assigned to infant deaths that cannot be explained after a thorough case investigation. SUID and SIDS may be prevented when parents and caregivers are supported in following recommended safe sleep practices (Hirai et al., 2019).

- In 2017, over 22,000 infants died in the United States, with 3,600 of deaths resulting from SUID (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).
- In 2017, 26 percent of SUIDs were caused by accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed, 38 percent by SIDS, and 26 percent from unknown causes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).
- From 2016 through 2017, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) rates declined from 38.0 infant deaths per 100,000 live births to 35.3 infant deaths (Ely & Driscoll, 2019).

Intervention and Outreach

Throughout the United States, various public and private sector entities have created and applied multiple interventions (e.g., programs, practices, campaigns, teaching methods and resources) to spread safe sleep practice guidelines to both professionals and caregivers. Yet, not all of these interventions are equally effective. For example, wide variations exist between state-specific SUID rates. One factor impacting the differences among states' SUID rates could be the differing levels of effectiveness among their programs. States with more significant declines in SUID rates may have more effective SUID risk-reduction programs that could serve as models for other states (Lambert, Parks, & Shapiro-Mendoza, 2018).

Furthermore, research demonstrates greater levels of success in certain components of SUID interventions and practices (Lambert, Parks, & Shapiro-Mendoza, 2018). For example, in a study conducted by the Strengthen the Evidence for Maternal and Child Health Programs team under a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Lai et al., 2017), researchers examined 23 peer-reviewed sources and one gray literature source on SUID interventions. The following trends emerged in the data; however, these findings should be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size of some of the studies utilized in the analysis:

- Interventions that target *caregivers only* appear to be **somewhat effective**.
- Interventions implemented at the *caregiver, health care provider, and hospital levels without quality improvement initiatives* appear to be **effective**.
- Interventions implemented at the *caregiver, health care provider, and hospital levels with quality improvement* appear to be **somewhat effective**.
- *National campaigns* appear to be **effective**.

Safe to Sleep Campaigns, Initiatives, and Partnerships

Military-Specific

U. S. Navy *Baby Safe Sleep Campaign*

The official “New Parent Support” tab on the *Commander, Navy Installation Command (CNIC)* website has a section dedicated to the Baby Safe Sleep campaign. This section describes the Navy Baby Safe Sleep mission to reduce the number of sleep-related child deaths in the military community. Tips for reducing risks, campaign marketing materials, and links to videos related to safe infant sleep are available.

- https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/counseling-advocacy-and-prevention/new_parent_support/SafeSleep.html

Delta Children Safe Sleep Campaign and Military Families

In 2018, in partnerships with the United Service Organizations (USO) and Operation Homefront, Delta Children gave away cribs, changing tables and mattresses to military families at Fort Bragg; Fort Dix; Bremerton, Washington; and Colorado Springs, Colorado. At each event, Safe Sleep resources were distributed and safety-tip

presentations were delivered to all attendees to stress the importance of creating a safe sleep environment.

- Delta Children Safe Sleep Campaign: <https://www.deltachildren.com/pages/safe-sleep-campaign>
- Article on Delta Children Safe Sleep Campaign in Military Communities: <https://babyandchildrensproductnews.com/6880/delta-children-supports-expecting-military-families-with-donations-totaling-over-328000-worth-of-cribs-and-mattresses/>

The International Military Hospital Certification Initiative

The International Military Hospital Certification Initiative strives to award recognition to military hospitals that demonstrate a commitment to community leadership for best practices and education in infant sleep safety. By becoming certified, a hospital is demonstrating their commitment to preventing infant sleep-related deaths.

- Military Hospital Certification Initiative: <https://cribsforkids.org/military-hospital-initiative/>
- Education Module for Health Care Providers & Clinical Staff: https://cribsforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/Cribs-for-Kids-Military-Initiative-Infant-Sleep-Safety-Education-Module-2019_tp-.pdf
- Article on National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston: <https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/685496/national-safe-sleep-hospital-certification-program-recognizes-sammc/>

The Air Force and SIDS Awareness Month

In October 2018, an online article was shared out of Edwards Air Force Base recognizing October as SIDS Awareness Month and highlighted the importance of safe infant sleep practices. The article included a graphic demonstrating the safest way to place a baby to sleep in a crib.

- <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Display/Article/1673422/helping-infants-sleep-safely/>

William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WABMC) Healthy Baby Campaign

As part of the military treatment facility's Healthy Baby Campaign in 2017, WABMC issued a safe sleep blanket, a toe-to-neck zip-up blanket with cutoff sleeves, designed to help newborns stay warm while reducing the risk of SIDS for newborn babies.

- https://www.army.mil/article/184654/wbamc_issues_innovative_newborn_blanket_to_minimize_sids

National-Level

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services & National Institutes of Health

- ***Safe to Sleep Campaign***
Through outreach activities, collaborations, and partnerships, Safe to Sleep aims to share safe sleep messages throughout the world. The website provides facts,

figures, and information about SIDS and safe infant sleep and contains printable and shareable resources, and suggested outreach activities.

- <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/>
- **SIDS Awareness Month**

October is SIDS Awareness Month. In 2019, the Safe to Sleep campaign participated in a social media campaign to increase the number of organizations helping to promote safe sleeping habits and affect social norms around safe infant sleep by making images of safe sleep environments more prevalent on social media. A digital toolkit was available to help organizations plan and conduct their own campaign and to participate in the Safe to Sleep SIDS Awareness Month campaign.
- <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/resources/sids-awareness-toolkit>

National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network (NAPPSS-IIN)

NAPPSS-IIN is an initiative funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration Maternal and Child Health Bureau in collaboration with the National Institute of Children's Health Quality. The aim of NAPPSS-IIN to make infant safe sleep and breastfeeding the national norm by aligning stakeholders to test safety bundles (a straightforward set of three to five evidence-based practices) in multiple care settings. The project is a cooperative agreement running July 2017 to July 2022.

- <https://www.nichq.org/project/national-action-partnership-promote-safe-sleep-improvement-and-innovation-network-nappss>

Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality (Infant Mortality CollIN)

Infant Mortality CollIN was a multiyear national movement engaging federal, state and local leaders, public and private agencies, professionals, and communities to employ quality improvement, innovation and collaborative learning to reduce infant mortality and improve birth outcomes.

- <https://www.nichq.org/project/collaborative-improvement-and-innovation-network-reduce-infant-mortality-infant-mortality>

Military-Sponsored Safe Infant Sleep-Related Resources

Military OneSource Resources for Service Providers and Leaders

The *Service Providers and Leaders Parenting* section of the Military OneSource website contains links to multiple military-related programs, resources, and printable products to be used by individuals working with military populations. Resources specific to safe infant sleep are outlined below. Printable "Safe to Sleep" Fact Sheets also offer useful ideas for sharing important messages about putting a baby safely to sleep. Links to additional resources are provided in each fact sheet.

- **Service Providers and Leaders: Parent Homepage:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/parenting>

- **Putting Baby Safely to Sleep: Tools for New Parent Support Program Home Visitors:** <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/products#!/detail/343>
- **Putting Baby Safely to Sleep: Tools for Child Development Service Providers:** <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/products#!/detail/345>
- **Putting Baby Safely to Sleep: Tools for Nurses, Family Physicians, Obstetricians and Pediatricians:** <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/products#!/detail/344>

New MilParent Specialty Consultation

Offered through Military OneSource, new MilParent specialty consultants provide confidential support on a variety of parenting topics including sleep. Eligible Service members and spouses include expectant parents and parents of children up to age 5. Access is available to eligible participants for an unlimited number of sessions. Service members and military families are also eligible for Military OneSource services for a full year after separating from the military.

- <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/specialty-consultations/new-milparent/new-milparent-consultation?inheritRedirect=true>

Clearinghouse Resources

Safe Infant Sleep Programs on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence

The program listed below has been reviewed and placed on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence (Continuum). For more information on the Continuum, placement levels, and the placement process, please visit the Continuum website at <https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/about>

The Happiest Baby (THB)

The Happiest Baby also known as The Happiest Baby on the Block, is a family and community-based intervention that intends to teach parents methods to reduce infant crying and increase infant's sleep.

- Placement: Unclear 0
- Military Sector: Air Force, Army, Navy
- Fact Sheet: https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2043

SIDS Prevention and Safe Sleep: Rapid Literature Review

In 2017, the Clearinghouse conducted a rapid literature review examining safe infant sleep practices to prevent SIDS. Literature available about the benefits of the Back to Sleep Campaign, a brief examination about co-sleeping and bed sharing, and recommendations to increase safe sleep practices and SIDS prevention awareness is also provided.

- https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SIDS_Prevention.pdf

Additional Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics: Safe Sleep

This website offers communication strategy recommendations and campaign materials such as videos and infographics.

- <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/campaigns/Safe-Sleep/Pages/default.aspx>

National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health: Safe Sleep

On this website, users may access briefs, analysis reports, transformation tools, and webinars on the topic of safe sleep. Links to practices that have shown promise in affecting safe sleep practices in the United States are accessible under the “Promising Practices” tab.

- <https://www.mchevidence.org/tools/npm/5-safe-sleep.php>

National Institute for Children’s Quality Health Resources

- **Literature Review of Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Safe Sleep Practices**

This review examines literature and analyses of current evidence-based safe sleep practice guidelines, policies and initiatives that provide health care provider training and modeling; increase infant caregiver knowledge and education; and promote safe sleep polices at the local, state and federal level.

- https://www.nichq.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/Lit%20Review_MO_SSSP_Final%20for%20Web.pdf
- **Promising Practices for Safe Sleep**

This resource identifies state and national emerging and promising practices to promote safe sleep in states and communities.
- https://www.nichq.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/PromisingPractices_MO_SSSP_Final%20for%20Web.pdf

Additional Assistance

The TA specialists at the Clearinghouse are happy to assist you. We provide support to professionals as they examine and make informed decisions about which programs fit specific situations and are worth the investment. Whether it is connecting you with the resources and tools to conduct a needs assessment in your community, suggesting the best evidence-based program or practice for your situation, or developing an evaluation plan, our team of experts is a call or email away.

Please visit our website at www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu or call 1-877-382-9185 to speak with a TA specialist.

Suggested Citation

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