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Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics

Endorsement of the Alabama Baby Box Project

Alabama had the third highest infant mortality rate in the nation between 2011 and 2013. And more recently, while it has stayed within its usual range, it rose from 8.6 per 1,000 in 2013 to 8.7 per 1,000 in 2014, translating to 517 lost lives per year. Approximately 21 percent of those deaths are related to a lack of understanding about safe sleep practices.

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has long been working on safe sleep and infant vitality, in conjunction with the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics and other partners who have been at the table for many years. We must continue, however, to look at a range of ways to get the message out.

In 2017, in just a few short months, the Alabama Baby Box Project has blossomed as one new way to tackle Alabama's infant mortality problem through promotion of safe sleep.

Thanks to an offer from the Baby Box Company to fund baby boxes for every new mother in Alabama, the Alabama Department of Human Resources is well on its way to making these boxes and their contents available at no charge to all new mothers across the state.

So what is the Alabama Baby Box Project? Through a series of distribution points, including Alabama hospitals, family guidance centers and others, new mothers can sign up to receive a box, which is lined with a mattress and safe to use as the infant's first bed and serves as a "starter kit" for their new baby, containing newborn necessities. Their only requirement is to complete our Alabama Baby Box video syllabus on the Baby Box University website, which is a series of short teaching videos from content experts on safe sleep techniques and other safety messages for new Alabama parents.

Baby boxes have a long history in Finland, demonstrating sharp reductions in the number of SIDS- and SUID-related deaths and helping the country achieve one of the world's lowest infant mortality rates. Now, the boxes are manufactured safely in the United States through The Baby Box Company, whose mission is to drive infant mortality down through the use of social media and the "power of the Baby Box." Their goal is to appeal to the millennials use of social media to get the safe sleep message across; the Baby Box is the "hook" to make that happen.

The biggest draw (and health benefit) of baby boxes is thought to be the reduction in SIDS. The exact cause of SIDS is not always known, but some of the potential hazards can arise while a baby is sleeping—suffocation, entrapment, or strangulation from things like clothing, loose sheets and blankets. Baby boxes provide a separate, safe surface for baby's sleep, free of fluffy blankets, toys and other items that contribute to unsafe sleeping environments.

While the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says there is not enough evidence yet to prove the benefits of baby boxes, the Alabama Chapter-AAP Executive Board reviewed the Baby Box safety materials and the specifics of the program, and endorses the project as a tool in the safe sleep toolbox and a way to bring important awareness to safe sleeping techniques. The project gives every baby whose parents agree to the education an opportunity for an immediate "safe place" to sleep.

We are very excited about this opportunity to impact an at-risk population.

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Safe Sleep

ABC's of Sleeping Babies

What is the safest way for your baby to sleep? Babies sleep safest when... they sleep alone on their back in an uncluttered crib or other safe sleep surface. Follow these simple "ABC's of Sleeping Babies" for guidance:

Alone

- We, along with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), recommend that the baby should sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed (room-sharing without bed-sharing).

Back

- Unless otherwise instructed by a pediatrician, an infant should always sleep on its back.
- An infant sleeping on its side or stomach faces increased risk of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).
- Infants should sleep without the aid of wedges and cushions.
- Here is an excellent [video](#) about creating a safe sleep environment for your baby.

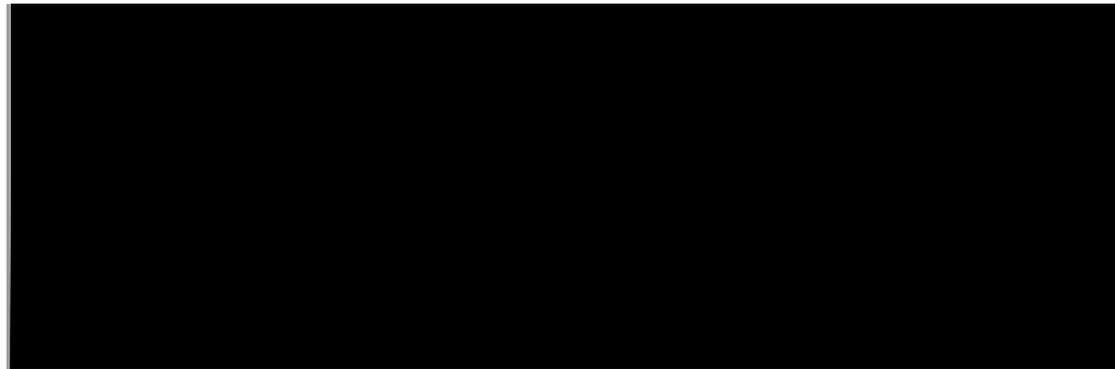
Crib

- Railings should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart - tight enough that a soda can will not fit through them.
- The mattress should be firm and covered with a tight, fitted sheet.
- Keep your baby's crib clutter-free - no quilts, duvets, bumper pads, stuffed animals, etc.
- Waterbeds, futons, recliners and sofas are not acceptable substitutes for a crib.
- This [video](#) explains the latest crib safety standards, so you understand why that crib handed down from your parents may not be the safest option for your infant.



Coach Saban on Creating a Safe Sleep Environment

Watch late



Safe Sleep for Your Baby

The following video was produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health as part of the "Safe to Sleep" campaign.



For more information on preventing infant sleep-related deaths, please view the following sites: [CDC-Sudden Infant Death \(SUID\)](#), [Updated 2016 AAP Recommendations](#), the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) and [First Candle](#).

Alabama Cribs for Kids

Alabama has partnered with the national Cribs for Kids Program and is dedicated to "Helping every baby sleep safer." Funding from the federal Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant has allowed Alabama to purchase a limited number of play-yards for families who meet qualifications and need a safe sleep environment for their infants under one year of age. If you or someone you know has a need, have them complete the [referral form](#) and email or fax. Except on weekends or state holidays, you will receive a response within 48 hours.

Forms that are required to be completed and returned by the requesting person or agency:

- [Enrollment In-Service Form](#)
- [Hold Harmless Agreement](#)
- [Cribs for Kids Survey 1](#)
- [Cribs for Kids Survey 2](#)

Visit [Crib for Kids](#) for additional information on the program.

We are excited to have this new [video](#) for grandparents and other trusted caregivers from the Safe to Sleep campaign

Alabama Collaborative on Safe Sleep

The Collaborative has produced a [Position Statement](#) providing valuable information about safe sleep issues and providing contact information for resources. The Collaborative has also developed a [Step-by-Step Blueprint](#) for the use of providers who are working to make the sleep environments in their facilities safer for infants.

Baby Box Initiative

On March 29, 2017, Alabama became the third state in the nation to launch the Baby Box safe sleep program. Alabama Department of Public Health is among the agencies collaborating to support safe sleep educational efforts. The Department of Human Resources is the lead agency offering a Baby Box to all expecting and new parents in the state. The goal of the Baby Box program is to provide parents the education and resources needed to ensure a safe sleep environment for their infant.

For more information contact Allison Foster of the Department of Human Resources at allison.foster@dhr.alabama.gov or 334-353-4825, or go online to <https://www.babyboxuniversity.com/content/syllabus/alabama>.

Baby Box [Distribution](#) Centers are located throughout the state.

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Bureau of Family Health Services