

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**  
**COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**SAFE SLEEPING STATEMENT**

This statement details for you the Centre's safe sleep practice as recommended by the National SIDS Council of Australia, trading as SIDS and Kids. This is a high-profile and well-respected not-for-profit organisation that boasts an enviable history of success. This National Australian body funds research, promotes reduce the risk campaigns and provides bereavement support to families.

This statement has been developed to:

- provide you with details on how we provide a safe sleep environment for your child whilst at the Centre.
- we provide further detailed information to inform your knowledge of the latest research outcomes in relation to safe sleep practice.

Babies and young children spend a lot of their time sleeping. Some sleeping arrangements are not safe. They can increase the risk of SIDS or cause serious sleeping accidents.

SIDS is short for 'Sudden Infant Death Syndrome' and used to be called 'cot death'. It means the sudden, unexpected death of a baby from no known cause.

Research has found some important ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and create a safe sleeping environment for babies and young children. This statement provides you with information to help us all create a safe sleeping environment for your child.

**CENTRE'S SAFE SLEEP GUIDELINES**

Sleep, at the Centre, is dependant on the individual child's needs, as discussed with families. The following guidelines are not negotiable for Centre Early Childhood Educators.

- **All children's areas will be warm and well ventilated;**
- **Visibility of children during rest periods is important - Lights must be on in cot rooms;**
- **All children will be placed on their back to sleep, from birth;**
- **All Children's faces will be uncovered at all times;**
- **Centre Early Childhood Educators will remove the outer layers of loose clothing to prevent overheating and entanglement;**
- **Once children are asleep, music in rest areas is turned off to ensure audio monitoring of any possible breathing distress;**
- **Cigarette smoke (passive or on clothing) is harmful for all children;**
- **We will only use cots which meet the Australian Standards (AS 2172)**  
[www.consumer.gov.au](http://www.consumer.gov.au);
- **Children's feet will be at the bottom of the cot**
- **Centre Early Childhood Educators will ensure bedclothes are tucked in securely so bedding is not loose.**
- **Sleep Checks**  
Once asleep, children should be observed at all times, however at intervals of 10 minutes or less the following checks must be undertaken by Centre Early Childhood Educators:
  1. place hand on child's chest to feel for rise and fall;
  2. listen for breathing and
  3. look at colour before moving away.

There is a checklist which is to be completed by Centre Early Childhood Educators after carrying out the above stated checks. This checklist will be filed daily with the daily feedback sheets.

**The following detailed information is taken directly from SIDS and KIDS Safe Sleeping Booklet endorsed by Paediatrics & Child Health Division the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.**

***Put baby on the back to sleep, from birth***

Sleeping on the back reduces the risk of SIDS. The chance of babies dying from SIDS is greater if they sleep on their tummies or sides. Put your baby on the back to sleep, from birth, unless your doctor or nurse tells you otherwise. Healthy babies placed to sleep on the back are less likely to choke on vomit than tummy sleeping infants.

If you are unsure about the best way to sleep your baby, speak with your doctor or nurse.

Tummy play is safe and good for babies when they are awake and an adult is present, but don't put baby on the tummy to sleep.

Baby-sitters and others who care for your baby may not know that tummy or side sleeping increases the risk of SIDS. Explain this to them before you leave your baby in their care.

Older babies can turn over and move around the cot. Put them on the back but let them find their own sleeping position. The risk of SIDS in babies over six months is extremely low.

***Sleep baby with face uncovered***

Be careful your baby's face and head stay uncovered during sleep as this decreases the risk of SIDS.

A good way to do this is to put baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so that baby can't slip down under the blankets. You might decide not to use blankets at all and instead, use a safe baby sleeping bag: one with fitted neck and arm holes.

When baby is put to sleep check that:

- Baby is tucked in securely or is in a safe sleeping bag.
- Cot bedding is not loose.
- There are no quilts, doonas, duvets, pillows or cot bumpers in the cot.

Taking baby into an adult bed may be unsafe if baby:

- Gets caught under adult bedding or pillows.
- Is trapped between the wall and the bed.
- Falls out of bed.
- Is rolled on by someone who sleeps very deeply or who is affected by drugs or alcohol.

***Cigarette smoke is bad for babies***

Cigarette smoke harms babies before birth and after. Parents who smoke during pregnancy and after the baby is born increase the risk of SIDS for their baby. In fact, if mother smokes, the risk of SIDS doubles, and if father smokes too, the risk doubles again.

There is an increased risk of SIDS if parents are smokers, even if they smoke outside, away from the baby. If mothers who are smokers bed share with their babies the risk of SIDS is increased. The reasons for this are not clear. However, we do know that being a non-smoker or smoking less will reduce the risk for your baby.

Try not to let anyone smoke near your baby - not in the house, the car or anywhere else your baby spends time. If you want to quit smoking and you're not finding it easy, ask for help. Call the QuitLine on **131 848** or ask your doctor, midwife or child health nurse for information and advice.

**How To Sleep Young Children Safely**

- Safe cot.
- Safe mattress.
- Safe bedding.
- Safe sleeping place, night and day.

## Safe Cot

### *Does the cot meet Australian Standards?*

All new and second-hand cots sold in Australia must meet the Australian Standard for Cots (AS 2172) and will carry a label to say so.

Old or second-hand cots may be dangerous for the following reasons:

- Wobbly or broken parts that make the cot weak.
- Gaps a toddler or baby can get caught in.
- Knobs, corner posts or exposed bolts that can hook onto a toddler's or baby's clothing around the neck.
- Sides that are too low and can be climbed over by active little toddlers.
- Sharp catches or holes in the wood that can hurt curious little fingers.
- Paint that might contain poisonous lead.

Check that cots meet the Australian Standard before use.

Babies can become trapped in a tilted rocking - cot or cradle. If you have a cradle or cot that rocks and has a locking pin, make sure you secure the locking pin firmly in place whenever you leave your baby, and double check it to make sure the cradle cannot move when you are not there to supervise.

### *Note - Portable or 'porta' cots*

Use the firm, clean, well-fitting mattress that is supplied with the portable cot. Don't add additional padding under the mattress as baby can get trapped face down in gaps created between the mattress and the cot wall. There is a separate Australian Standard that is used for all portable cots. The portable cot Australian Standard is AS 2195 and portable cots that meet the standard carry a label to say so.

### **Remember:**

Always look for the Australian Standard for Cots before you buy a cot. If you are planning to use a second-hand cot, check that it meets the standard. For a guide to cot and nursery furniture safety, visit the Consumer Affairs website at [www.consumer.gov.au](http://www.consumer.gov.au) for the publication 'Keeping Baby Safe'.

## Safe Mattress

### *Is the cot mattress the right size for the cot, and is it firm and clean?*

A toddler or baby can get stuck in gaps between the mattress and the cot sides. This is especially dangerous if their face is trapped and covered, or their neck is restricted in any way. Make sure there is no more than a 25mm (1inch) gap between the mattress and the cot sides and ends.

Remove plastic packaging from the mattress. Always make sure the waterproof mattress protector is strong and a tight fit.

A pillow or cushion is not a safe mattress. They are soft and may cover baby's face.

## Safe Bedding

### *Remove pillows, quilts, doonas, duvets and lambskins from the cot*

Soft and puffy bedding in the cot is unnecessary and may cover your baby's face and make breathing difficult.

If you firmly wrap or swaddle your baby, it is safer not to cover baby's head.

## A Safe Place to Sleep

### *During night & day, look out for dangers*

The following are things to look out for and avoid where your toddler or baby sleeps -both during the night and for any daytime naps. Remember to look for these things in your own home and anywhere your child is cared for -including day care, childcare centres and the homes of family and friends.

**1. An unsupervised adult bed may be unsafe for babies or toddlers if they:**

- Get caught under adult bedding or pillows.
- Get trapped between the wall and the bed.
- Fall out of bed.
- Are rolled on by someone who sleeps very deeply or who is affected by drugs or alcohol.

The risk of accident is increased if you leave your baby or toddler alone on an adult bed or bunk bed.

**2. Soft sleeping places where a toddlers or baby's face may get covered:**

If you fall asleep with the baby while on a couch or sofa, there is a very high risk of a sleeping accident. Babies don't need pillows. Pillows, cushions or tri pillows are too soft and can cover baby's face. Don't put your baby or toddler on a waterbed or beanbag. They are not safe for babies or toddlers.

**3. Dangling cords or string**

Keep the cot away from any cords hanging from blinds, curtains or electrical appliances because they could get caught around baby's neck. Keep mobiles out of the reach of curious little hands and mouths.

**4. Heaters and electrical appliances**

Keep heaters or any electrical appliances well away from the cot to avoid the risk of overheating, burns and electrocution. Don't use electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags for babies or young children.

Remember that your toddler or baby cannot escape from a bed or cot to cool down and does not know how to remove bedclothes. A baby that becomes too hot is at an increased risk of SIDS.

**5. Prams, strollers and bouncers where restraints are not done up**

*The Centre does not allow children to sleep in prams and strollers as directed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.*

Always do up the restraints when baby is in a pram, stroller, bouncer or any other baby/toddler equipment. It can be dangerous if baby becomes tangled in loose restraints. Also, restraints will not be the safety measure they should be if they are not done up the way they are supposed to be. Make sure the footrest on the stroller is strong and secure. A weak footrest may give way and cause baby to become trapped.

**Further Information**

- We encourage you to access further information from the following WEB Site: <http://www.sidsandkids.org>
- If you have any questions at all, about how to reduce the risk of SIDS and sleep your baby safely, there are a number of ways you can get answers to your questions.
- Talk to your doctor or child health nurse. Call SIDS and Kids in your state or territory on 1300 308 307.
- There is a SIDS and Kids safe sleeping 'Frequently Asked Questions' sheet, which answers many additional questions. Ask for it to be sent to you.

**Links to other documents:**

Clothing Statement;  
Checklist – Placing young children down to sleep  
Rest Memo

**Reference:**

SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping Booklet  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
Education and Care Services National Regulations

Approved: 25 October 1994

Revised and approved: 29 July 1997

Revised 20 September 2006

Approved: 4 October 2006 – Minute 363.7 iii.

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Approved 27 August 2009 – Minute 388.7 ii. a.

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