

SAFE SLEEP SAVES LIVES!

IMAGE GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

SIDS is the leading cause of death for infants one month to one year of age and claims the lives of nearly 2,500 babies each year. In addition, there are up to 2,000 sudden, unexpected infant deaths (SUID) caused by accidental suffocation or accidents during sleep each year. For many of these babies, the safe sleep and safety recommendations set forth by First Candle and the American Academy of Pediatrics may have been able to save these babies' lives.

A recent study conducted by Dr. Rachel Moon at the Children's National Medical Center found that in magazines targeting women of childbearing age, more than one-third showed babies in unsafe sleep positions and more than two thirds showed babies in unsafe sleep environments.

CALL TO ACTION

In response to these alarming statistics, First Candle calls upon members of the media (print, electronic and broadcast) and their advertisers to create, select and use only images which depict babies (who appear to be 18 months of age or younger) in safe sleep positions and safe sleep environments. Specifically, these would include the following recommendations:

- All babies should be shown sleeping or being put to sleep on their backs.
- All babies should be shown sleeping in a safety-approved crib, play yard or similar safe, but separate sleep environment (not with an adult or on an adult bed, sofa, chair, or other unsafe place.)
- Babies should not be shown sleeping in car seats, infant carriers, swings, slings or other similar products.
- Where possible, photos should demonstrate room sharing for babies under 6 months of age; showing the baby's separate, safe sleep area in the room with, or alongside, the adult bed.
- Photos should not show soft or loose bedding items such as blankets, quilts, soft or pillow-like bumpers, pillows or stuffed animals in the baby's sleep space.
- If possible, show sleeping babies dressed in a wearable blanket or other sleeper to keep them warm instead of loose blankets.
- Consider showing a pacifier with a sleeping baby greater than one month of age.
- The baby's sleep space should be shown a safe distance away from windows. If a window shade is shown, the cord should not be in close proximity to or within reach of the baby.
- The crib mattress height should be shown at the lowest level for babies who appear to be able to pull or stand up.
- Crib gyms or mobiles should not be used in photos of babies who appear to be five months of age and older.

By adopting First Candle's safe sleep image guidelines, we can all play a role in ensuring that every baby is given the best possible chance to celebrate not only his or her first birthday, but many happy birthdays beyond.

August, 2009