EDUCATING OLDER CAREGIVERS WITH

Safe Infant Sleep Tips

by Michael Goodstein, MD, FAAP

It may be difficult to discuss modern parenting recommendations and safe infant sleep habits with older generations. **Here are a few tips to manage those conversations:**

Assure the older caregiver that you all want what is best for baby.

Reassure them that babies are safe when sleeping on their backs. Babies have a reflex to keep their airway clear and avoid choking. They automatically cough up or swallow any fluid or spit up. Evidence has shown that babies are more likely to choke or aspirate when sleeping on their stomachs.

Inform older caregivers that there are new pediatric recommendations for infant safe sleeping. More research has been done, and guidelines have changed since grandparents have raised a child. These new guidelines have saved the lives of thousands of babies!

Did you know?

Before 1992, over 8,000 babies died of SIDS and other sleep-related deaths in the United States every year. Since changing the recommendation from stomach positioning to back positioning, that number has decreased by over half.

REMEMBER THE ABCS OF SAFE SLEEP

Alone

No bed-sharing. Infants should never be placed with a parent, sibling or another caregiver. Nothing should ever be in the crib with an infant.

Back

Babies should be placed on their backs to sleep. An infant should never be placed to sleep on their side or stomach. Placing a baby to sleep on their stomach doubles the risk of death!

Crib

Infants should always sleep in a safety-approved crib, bassinet or portable crib, free of any soft objects (pillows, blankets, stuffed animals and/or bumper pads). The crib mattress or portable crib mat should be firm with only a tight-fitted bottom sheet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING SAFE SLEEP, VISIT THESE TRUSTED RESOURCES

CRIBS FOR KIDS

HEALTHYCHILDREN.ORG

CHARLIE'S KIDS

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Productive Safe Sleep Conversations

When discussing sensitive health topics, especially with older caregivers, the OARS framework offers a trusted and effective approach. Standing for **Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflective listening and Summarizing,** it guides meaningful dialogue and ensures concerns are addressed with care. These prompts serve as starting points, allowing parents and healthcare providers to adapt them based on their approach and the conversation's specific needs.

Designed to encourage open communication about infant safety as guidelines evolve, **OARS helps caregivers engage in respectful, productive discussions** that validate experiences while incorporating up-to-date medical recommendations.

Open-Ended Questions

Encouraging caregivers to share their perspectives and experiences helps build trust and provides insight into their concerns.

- "What are your thoughts on the current recommendations for baby sleep safety?"
- "How do you feel about the changes in safe sleep guidelines since your experience with raising children?"

Affirmations

Recognizing the caregiver's dedication and experience fosters a positive and collaborative discussion.

- "It's great to see how much you care about what's best for the baby."
- "Your experience as a caregiver is invaluable, and it's clear you want to ensure the baby's safety."

Reflective Listening

Restating the caregiver's concerns ensures they feel heard and helps clarify the discussion.

- "It sounds like you're concerned about the baby's sleeping position and want to ensure they're safe."
- "I hear you expressing a desire to do what's best for the baby, and it's understandable to have questions about the new guidelines."

Summarizing

Bringing together key points from the conversation reinforces mutual understanding and emphasizes safety.

- "To recap, we all agree that the safety of the baby is our top priority. It's important to note that babies are safest when sleeping on their backs, as they have reflexes that help keep their airways clear."
- "The latest pediatric recommendations reflect new research that has significantly improved infant safety, saving countless lives. Let's explore these guidelines together to ensure you feel comfortable and informed."

Pampers professional

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