



George E. Pataki  
Governor

NEW YORK STATE  
OFFICE OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES  
52 WASHINGTON STREET  
RENSSELAER, NY 12144

John A. Johnson  
Commissioner

## Informational Letter

**Transmittal:** 04-OCFS-INF-06  
**To:** Local District Commissioners  
NYS William B. Hoyt Children and Family Trust Fund  
NYS Department of Health  
Local and Regional Child Fatality Review Teams  
**Issuing Division/Office:** Division of Development and Prevention Services/ Office of Field Operations  
**Date:** June 29, 2004  
**Subject:** Safe Sleeping for Infants  
**Suggested Distribution:** Directors of Services  
Foster Care Supervisors  
Adoption Supervisors  
Staff Development Coordinators  
Family Court  
Fatality Team Coordinators  
**Contact Person(s):** Art Ambuhl (518) 473-9447 or Michael Cahill (518) 474-9441; or by e-mail at [Art.Ambuhl@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Art.Ambuhl@dfa.state.ny.us) or [Michael.Cahill@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Michael.Cahill@dfa.state.ny.us)  
**Attachments:** A – see link below -Back to Sleep/ Safe to Sleep: Brochure  
B – see link below- Back to Sleep/ Safe to Sleep: Information Sheet With Helpful Tips to Keep Your Baby Safe

**Attachment Available On – Line:** A: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5002.pdf>  
B: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5008.pdf>

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to issue a brochure and a companion information sheet by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) containing helpful tips for parents and professionals on how to keep infants safe while sleeping. The brochure, entitled *Back to Sleep/Safe to Sleep*, and the information sheet describe ways to

help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and the death of infants while sleeping with others.

## **II. Background**

One of OCFS's functions is to issue fatality reports on children who die as a result of suspected abuse or maltreatment. In the course of preparing these reports, OCFS has identified a disturbing number of fatalities involving the sleeping arrangements of infants. Many of these cases involved infants sleeping alone in unsafe surroundings or infants sleeping with other persons, such as their parents or other household members.

To alert parents, foster parents, day care providers, and other providers responsible for the care of children, OCFS has worked in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health to develop materials on safe sleeping for infants. *Back to Sleep/Safe to Sleep* reminds parents and other caretakers to place a baby on his or her back to sleep, unless the child's doctor states otherwise, and to make sure the baby's face and head stay uncovered during sleep to help prevent SIDS.

Furthermore, the brochure and information sheet discuss the dangers of sleeping with infants on cramped or unsafe surfaces, or if the parent or caretaker is overtired or has been drinking or using drugs. The tips draw on findings contained in OCFS child fatality reports and on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. OCFS hopes that these materials will remind parents and caretakers to check that it is "Safe to Sleep" when putting infants to bed, helping prevent infant deaths while sleeping.

## **III. Program Implications**

The brochure and information sheet have been posted on the OCFS website at [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us). They target parents of infants and young children and prospective or expectant parents, including expectant teens, but are useful for other caretakers as well.

*Larry G. Brown s/s*

---

### **Issued By**

Name: Larry G. Brown

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Division of Development and Prevention Services