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## **Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition urges use of Safe Sleep ABCs to prevent nearly 90 infant deaths a year**

JEFFERSON CITY, MO –One of the greatest risks for infant death in Missouri is an unsafe sleep environment. In fact, 42 of 89 sleep-related infant deaths in 2018 occurred while the infant was sleeping in an adult bed. When parents and care providers use the ABCs of safe sleep, the baby sleeping **A**lone, on their **B**ack, and in a bare **C**rib, the infant is more likely to live to see their first birthday.

The Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition sincerely thanks [Governor Parson for proclaiming October as Infant Safe Sleep Awareness month](#) to draw the attention of Missourians to the lifesaving importance of always placing babies in a safe sleep environment.

“The number of [sleep-related infant deaths](#) has sadly remained rather steady over the years,” said **Jennifer Tidball, Acting Director, Department of Social Services**. “Improving Missourians’ awareness of the dangers of unsafe sleep is vital. A baby must be alone and on their back in their own bare crib every night and every nap. That said, being a parent can be taxing. I encourage overwhelmed parents to reach out to trusted family members and friends for support.”

Infants sleep safest when they sleep alone, on their back, and in a crib, bassinet, or portable play-yard with a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheet with no other items in their sleep area. It is vital that parents, grandparents, relatives, child care providers, and all infant caregivers are aware of safe sleep guidelines and place infants to sleep in a safe environment for every sleep. The Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition urges Missourians use and share this [ABCs of Safe Sleep flyer](#) with others who care for infants to keep Missouri babies safe through their first year of life.

Most unsafe sleep deaths are preventable. The Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition raises awareness

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of the important steps parents, caregivers, child care providers, and health professionals can take to reduce sleep-related infant deaths and disparities in these deaths. The goal in Missouri is to have zero preventable infant deaths due to unsafe sleep by spreading awareness about safe sleep and safe sleep environments through proper education and resources. [Know the ABCs of Safe Sleep video](#) tells how to keep a napping or sleeping baby safe and includes heartbreaking parent and grandparent stories about the loss an infant in their care due to unsafe sleep.

The Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition collaborators include the Departments of [Social Services](#), [Health and Senior Services](#), and the [Children's Trust Fund](#), Infant Loss Resources, Children's Mercy Hospital, Generate Health St. Louis, Saint Francis Healthcare System, Nurses for Newborns, SSM Health, St. Louis Children's Hospital, and many other local agencies.

The Department of Social Services urges every Missourian to be especially attentive to the safety and wellbeing of children during COVID-19 and strongly encourages anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-392-3738. The Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline responds is answered 24-hours a day, every day, all year round. Callers can report anonymously.

**The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.** Visit [dss.mo.gov](https://dss.mo.gov) to learn more about the Department of Social Services and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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