

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May tkdate, 2008

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DRAFT

STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN TO STOP CO-SLEEPING DEATHS

LAUNCHED BY NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES &
MORE THAN THREE DOZEN COUNTY LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS

BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE

New York State Office of Children & Family Services Commissioner Gladys Carrión, tk County Social Services Commissioner tkname, and more than three dozen local social services commissioners across the state today launched a joint campaign to stop a preventable crisis: infants dying when sharing a bed with an adult.

There have been 89 infant or small child death reports to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment since 2006, where the child was co-sleeping with a parent, sibling, or caregiver, according to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Co-sleeping is risky. If an adult or child rolls over on a baby, the baby can be hurt or even suffocated. Sleeping with a child can be dangerous, especially if you drink, use drugs, are overweight, or sleep on a couch. To keep your baby close, put his crib or bassinet near your bed.

The Office of Children and Families estimates that co-sleeping is involved in approximately 20 percent of the child fatalities reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

Three-quarters of the children in co-sleeping incidents were newborn to three months old. Adult co-sleepers involved in these incidents were most likely to be the child's mothers, age 18 to 24 years old. Nearly 40 percent of these co-sleeping incidents occurred on the weekend.

To prevent further fatalities, the State, local counties, and the City of New York are joining together to launch a "BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE" statewide public education campaign, adapted from materials originally developed for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's "TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR BABY" child safety campaign.

"Just over a dozen small children died so far this year in beds they were sharing with their caregivers," said Commissioner Carrión at a press conference at Manhattan's Metropolitan Hospital maternity ward, on Thursday, May 8. "These may have been preventable deaths."

Carrion's comments are being echoed statewide at launch events this month in more than 30 counties.

At tk Hospital in tk County, Social Services Commissioner tkname said: "These deaths cross cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic demographics. By leveraging our joint resources, we will educate caregivers to save children's lives."

The **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** public education campaign is comprised of the following:

- Simultaneous campaign media launches in New York’s Designated Market Areas (DMAs), including New York City, Buffalo, Albany, Rochester, Syracuse, Plattsburgh, Binghamton, Utica, Elmira, and Watertown, and, over the next month, in over three dozen counties, including: Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schuyler, Seneca, Suffolk, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates
- A **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** English and Spanish-language radio campaign across New York State targeting caregivers 18 to 39 years old
- Distribution of 200,000 English and Spanish-language **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** posters, 200,000 English and Spanish pamphlets and 15,000 baby bibs through the Office of Children and Family Services **“NY Loves Safe Babies”** network and professional associations, doctors’ offices, child care providers, family resource centers, county social services and health offices, Red Cross babysitter training programs, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) centers, maternity hospitals and birthing centers, prenatal programs, adolescent pregnancy programs, kinship care programs, Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Programs, high school family and consumer science education programs and the infant industry
- **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** Public Service Announcement telecast over the Cablevision and Time Warner Cable networks
- Launch of a **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** website and Facebook page where a fact sheet, pamphlets, and video and audio podcasts will be available for viewing and download
- Outreach effort to English and Spanish-language daily and weekly newspapers and magazines; parenting & family writers, columnists, websites and blogs; editorial boards; and television and radio stations
- Links to the **“BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE”** public education campaign on state, municipal, contractor, and vendor websites

For more information, visit www.ocfs.state.ny.us/babiessleepsafestalone or call 1 (800) 345-KIDS.