



Title	Sudden Unexplained Death in Infancy Policy & Procedure
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Approved By	General Manager
Owner	General Manager
Version	6
Purpose or Reason	Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011
Source or Reference Material	www.rednose.org.au

VERSION CONTROL

Version No.	Date	Comment	Author
1	Nov 2005	Developed to ensure a clear set of guidelines for safe sleeping and resting.	Manager
2	July 2013	Incorporate changes to the terminology used in this subject.	General Manager
3	Nov 2014	Reviewed and reformatted by ACS CoM for consistency	ACS CoM
4	Mar 2015	Updated in response to recommendation from SIDS & Kids that amber necklaces not be worn when children are sleeping or resting	General Manager
5	Mar 2017	Updated formatting to ensure clarity SIDS & Kids organisation is now Red Nose organisation	General Manager
6	Sep 2017	Reviewed ahead of changes to the National Quality Framework Included policy principles from http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Safe-sleep-and-rest-practices	General Manager

Policy

Scope

The Policy and Procedure applies to all Alpine Children's Services (ACS) staff, Family Day Care Educators, parents/guardians, children, volunteers, students and contractors involved with the service.

Policy Statement

To reduce the risk of Sudden Unexplained Death in Infancy (SUDI), ACS shall create safe sleeping and resting environments for babies and young children. Many of the risk factors for SUDI are common to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and fatal sleeping accidents, therefore safe sleeping strategies will target all causes of SUDI. The risk of SUDI can be reduced by following some simple advice for taking care of a baby.

Objectives/Principles

- Staff will supervise the rest and sleeping environments, maintaining ratios set out in the Education and Care Services National regulations 2011.
- Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and is safe at a service.
- ACS has a duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard.
- ACS is responsible for ensuring sleep and rest policies and procedures are in place.
- This policy is based on current research and recommended evidence-based principles and guidelines. [Red Nose](#) (formerly SIDS and Kids) is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.
- This policy is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it is maintained in line with best practice principles and guidelines.
- ACS will provide information and training to nominated supervisors and educators to ensure they fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time.
- ACS will consult with families about their child's individual needs and be sensitive to different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep and rest.
- Children have different sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Children of the same age can have different sleep patterns, which nominated supervisors and educators need to consider within the service

Procedure

1. Sleep baby on the back, not on the tummy or side

Sleeping on the back reduces the risk of SUDI. The chance of babies dying suddenly and unexpectedly is greater if they sleep on their tummies or sides. ACS will put each baby on their back to sleep, from birth, on a firm, flat surface.

If a baby younger than six months old needs to sleep on their stomach for health reasons, ACS must have a letter from the child's medical practitioner and family to state this is acceptable practice for the child.

Babies over the age of 4 months can usually turn over in the cot. These babies may be placed in a safe baby sleeping bag (i.e. fitted neck and arm holes, and no hood). Educators will put them on babies back but educators may let them find their own sleeping position. The risk of sudden infant death in babies over six months is extremely low.

2. Sleep baby with head and face uncovered

A baby's face and head needs to stay uncovered during sleep as this reduces the risk of SUDI. A good way to do this is to put baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so that baby can't slip down under the bedding. Some families may decide not to use blankets at all and instead, use a safe baby sleeping bag: one with fitted neck and arm holes and no hood.

When baby is placed to sleep check that:

- a) Baby's feet are positioned at the bottom of the cot;
- b) Bedding is tucked in securely, is not loose, or place baby in a safe baby sleeping bag;
- c) Head coverings are removed before baby is placed for sleep (including hooded tops); and
- d) There are no doonas, pillows, lambswool or bumpers in the cot.

3. Provide a Safe Sleeping Environment (how to sleep babies safely)

Safe cot

Cot sides must be pulled up when a child is placed in a cot. Educators will not hang any material-blanket, sheets etc, at the end of the cots to block light out of children's view of each other (if this is done to block out light, remove once the child is asleep). This increases the risk of those materials covering a child's face during sleep.

If ACS is purchasing a new cot, ACS will ensure the cot meets the current standards by referring to the guide to infant and nursery products publication "Keeping baby safe" available from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's website www.productsafety.gov.au.

Safe mattress

A baby can get wedged in gaps between the mattress and the cot sides. This is especially dangerous if their face is trapped and covered, or their neck is restricted in any way. ACS will ensure there is no more than 20mm (less than 1 inch) gap between the mattress and the cot sides and ends. ACS will remove plastic packaging from the mattress.

Firm mattresses on the floor are acceptable but must be placed well apart to ensure a baby doesn't get trapped between two mattresses. A pillow, bean bag or cushion is not a safe mattress.

Safe bedding

ACS will not use pillows, doonas, lamb's wool and bumpers in a cot. Soft and puffy bedding in the cot is unnecessary and may cover your baby's face and obstruct baby's breathing. Refer to the Red Nose information statements: 'Pillow Use' and 'Soft Toys' for further information.

If a family wraps their baby, consider the baby's stage of development. ACS will not include the arms in a wrap (i.e. ensure that the arms are left free) once the startle reflex disappears around 3 months. ACS will discontinue the use of a wrap when a baby can roll from back to tummy and to back again. The wrap may prevent an older baby who has turned onto their tummy from returning to the back position. Refer to the Red Nose information statement: 'Wrapping Babies' and 'Safe Wrapping Brochure' for further information.

ACS understands the recommendations of removing soft toys or loose bedding in the home environment. ACS recognises that the licensed children's services are a different environment with improved supervision and that many babies would be unable to fall asleep without their soft toy and/or loose bedding. Therefore, ACS recommends soft toys and loose bedding are removed if possible when the baby is asleep.

Safe sleeping place

- Beanbags, couches, pillows and cushions are not safe for babies
- Avoid falling asleep with the baby on a couch, sofa or chair
- Keep the cot away from hanging cords such as blinds, curtains, electrical appliances or mobiles
- Keep heaters or electrical appliances well away from cots
- Never use electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags for babies
- Staff will monitor the room temperature and airflow during sleep or resting periods, as it can be dangerous for children to get overheated. In accordance with the guidelines set by Red Nose, staff will not wrap children in heavy blankets using only a thin cotton sheet reducing the risk of overheating
- Prams: if a pram is covered to rock a child to sleep, then it must be half uncovered or removed to allow air flow. Always do up the restraints when baby is in a pram, stroller, bouncer or any other baby/toddler equipment. Make sure the footrest on the stroller is strong and secure. A weak footrest may give way and cause baby to become trapped
- Bottles can be given to babies/children whilst going to sleep. Once the child is asleep it must be removed from the cot. No child is to be left awake and with a bottle unsupervised
- Children's outer clothing to be removed for comfort taking in consideration on the warmth of the room, blanket warmth and thickness of wrap
- After 6 months of age, children who are being wrapped in a sheet may be attempting to get out of it; they should no longer be placed in a wrap if this is the case. Staff can suggest to families to bring a sleep suit for rest times
- Sleep checks: sleeping children younger than 12 months must be actively checked by an educator every 15 minutes and the educator must initial a form to attest they have checked each child

Necklaces and bracelets

All necklaces and bracelets will be removed from children under three years old prior to their sleep or rest period.

Safe rest

Older children may have a sleep or rest as needed on the carpet/rug/floor mattress.

Smoke free environment

ACS will provide a smoke free environment.

4. Family's Beliefs and Requests

If a family's beliefs and requests are in conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, ACS will determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices. For example, with some rare medical conditions, it may be necessary for a baby to sleep on his or her stomach or side, which is contrary to Red Nose recommendations. It is expected that in this scenario ACS would only endorse the practice, with the written support of the baby's medical practitioner. ACS may also consider undertaking a risk assessment and implementing risk minimisation plans for the baby.

In other circumstances, nominated supervisors and educators must not endorse practices requested by a family, if they differ with Red Nose recommendations. Nominated supervisors and educators will refer to the service's Sleep and Rest Policies and Procedures if parents make requests that are contrary to the safety of the child. **Child safety should always be the first priority.**