

**Home Visiting Task Force**

**Home Visiting, Birth to Three, and Child Safety Resource Guide**

**May 2019**

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The Illinois Home Visiting Task Force (HVTF) convened a *Child Safety Ad Hoc Group* starting on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018, to devise a plan for collecting and disseminating resources on child injury prevention for Birth to Three providers. Members of the group submitted resources, which were reviewed, catalogued, and prepared for distribution in this document and at <http://igrowillinois.org/health-and-safety-resources/>.

These resources are for Home Visitors and other Birth to Three direct service providers, as well as their supervisors. These materials include training information for Home Visitors and other providers, which can be discussed and reinforced by their supervisors. Also included are handouts that can be shared with parents and caregivers. In addition to the tips provided below, a **comprehensive list of resources is available at** <http://igrowillinois.org/health-and-safety-resources/>.

*These general resources are current as of January 2019. Please note that safety information, including product recall information and public health guidance, is constantly being updated. Providers are advised to check with specific sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), SafeKids, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), for the latest updates.*

## **Introduction**

Each year, unintentional and intentional injuries take a devastating toll on children and families. Nationwide, unintentional injury continues to be the leading cause of death among children ages 1-14.<sup>1</sup> These injuries result from causes such as falls, drowning, fires and burns, poisoning, suffocation, motor vehicle accidents, firearms, prescription or other drug overdoses, and sports—incidents that are both preventable and predictable.<sup>2</sup> Intentional child injuries include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Unfortunately, at least one in seven children in the United States have experienced some form of child abuse and/or neglect in the past year.<sup>3</sup>

Both intentional and unintentional child injuries can have lasting impacts on children’s and families’ physical health, social and emotional well-being, and financial stability. In Illinois, child injuries accounted for 107 deaths, 1,302 hospital discharges, and 100,486 emergency department visits in 2014.<sup>4</sup> During State Fiscal Year 2018, in Illinois there were 20,328 “indicated” cases of child abuse and neglect, including 4,807 cases of sexual abuse, 49 child deaths due to abuse, and 50 child deaths due to neglect.<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately, Home Visitors and other Birth to Three providers can play a vital role in preventing child injury. Home Visitors already offer screening, education, coaching, and empowerment to parents around child development, parent-child attachment, and access to health care and other services. As they build relationships with parents, they can use this timely opportunity to deliver key messages around child safety, and they can connect parents with information and resources to reduce risk of child injury.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amerson, N. & Martin, J.; Illinois Department of Public Health: Home Visiting Task Force Meeting- Infant and Early Childhood Injury. July 23 2018.

<sup>2</sup> [https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4\\_Safety.pdf](https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_Safety.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Fortson B, Klevens J, Merrick M, Gilbert L, Alexander S. (2016). Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>4</sup> Amerson, N. & Martin, J.; Illinois Department of Public Health: Home Visiting Task Force Meeting- Infant and Early Childhood Injury. July 23 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Illinois Department of Child and Family Services: Six - Year Statistics on Child Protective Services, December 31, 2018.

[https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/newsandreports/Documents/ESS\\_Protective\\_Services.pdf](https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/newsandreports/Documents/ESS_Protective_Services.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CAN-factsheet.pdf>

## Tips for Home Visitors and other Birth to Three Providers

These are general tips that providers can share with families. More information is provided at <http://igrowillinois.org/health-and-safety-resources/>.

### Safe Sleep

Follow the **ABC'S** of Safe Sleep: Nighttime and Naptime (for EVERY Sleep), infants should always be placed:

- **ALONE** – one baby per crib
- On their **BACKS**
- In a safe **CRIB**
- and in a **SMOKE-FREE** environment (SIDS of IL, Inc. 2011)

The only items considered safe for infant sleeping are labeled specifically as:

- Full Size Crib (no drop-sides and built after December 2010)
- Portable Play Yard (such as a Cribette or Pack n Play) in excellent condition
- Bassinet - stand alone or as part of the portable play yard.

Car Seats are NOT safe for infant sleep when not installed in car. Baby must sleep FLAT. There have been a number of deaths reported on infants sleeping in items other than a Crib, Portable Play yard, or Bassinet. It is not safe for baby to sleep in a swing, bouncy seat, or other items marketed for infant sleep, but not tested for infant sleep safety. If baby falls asleep in one of these items, move baby to a safe crib as soon as possible.

Mattress must be firm, without holes or tears in cover, and fit snugly in crib. If you can fit more than 2 finger-widths between mattress and slat, the mattress is too small.

To maintain a safe sleeping environment for baby, the only items needed are:

1. Crib
  2. Mattress firm and flat, properly fitted
  3. Tightly fitted sheet
  4. Baby
- Baby should always be placed on back to sleep for the first year of life. Once baby is competent at rolling back to front and back again, you can place them on back to sleep, but then let them adopt the way they want to sleep (side or stomach).
  - Please do NOT share a sleeping surface with baby (adult bed, couch, recliner, etc.). There is NO safe way to bedshare. It increases the risk of suffocation, and significantly increases the risk of SIDS.
  - Share a bedroom with parents, but not the same sleeping surface, preferably until the baby turns 1 but at least for the first six months. Room-sharing decreases the risk of SIDS by as much as 50 percent.
  - Breastfeed for 6 months if possible. Breast milk is the perfect food for baby and is good for you too! Studies have shown that mothers who breastfeed for at least 6 months, can significantly decrease their risk of breast cancer ([Can Breastfeeding Reduce Cancer Risk? Breastfeed Med.](#) Published online October 25, 2018. Accessed January 24, 2019 *Medscape*).
  - If baby uses a pacifier for nighttime and naptime, it may also be in the crib with baby, but NO string, lanyard, or any kind of leash. Pacifier should not be offered until a good breastfeeding pattern has been established.
  - No soft bedding, stuffed animals, pillows, blankets or quilts, bumpers (quilted or mesh) in crib with baby. These are all suffocation hazards and can prevent infant deaths. The crib should be bare.
  - Avoid baby's exposure to cigarette smoke (nicotine), including vaping, alcohol, and illicit drugs.
  - Do not use home monitors or commercial devices, including wedges or positioners, marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS. They are NOT medical devices. This does not include the use of audio or video monitoring. Make sure that any/all cords are not within reach of baby's crib to prevent a strangulation death.
  - Baby should receive all recommended vaccinations.

- Don't let baby get overheated during sleep. Unless specifically instructed by physician, baby should not wear a hat indoor. It is important to keep face and head uncovered, especially during sleep. Baby should wear as many layers as parent to keep them from overheating. Instead of a blanket, using a wearable blanket can be safer while keeping baby comfortable.
- There is no evidence to suggest that swaddling baby will reduce SIDS. Swaddling baby with arms in should stop at 8 weeks of age, or sooner if rolling.
- Don't forget about Tummy Time. It can begin the day the baby is born, but it must ALWAYS be supervised.
- Make sure that anyone taking care of your baby, follows the safe sleep recommendations (Pediatrics, November 2016, Volume 138/Issue 5, From the American Academy of Pediatrics Position Statement. Accessed January 24, 2019).
- For more information, please contact [SIDS of Illinois](#), Inc. at 800-432-7437 (SIDS) or [sids@sidsillinois.org](mailto:sids@sidsillinois.org).

Always check the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Safe Kids, or Kids in Danger for product recalls.

### **Car Safety**

- Before buying a car seat, check the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) or [SafeKids](#) for product recalls.
- Install the car seat before the baby is born, and have it checked by a certified technician.
- Infant car seats must be rear-facing. The latest Illinois car seat regulations are available from the [Secretary of State](#).
- Never leave an infant alone in the car.
- Avoid keeping the infant in bulky coats and blankets while in the car seat; avoid all the extras and don't overheat baby.
- If the baby falls asleep in the car, put her/him on a flat sleep surface as soon as possible after arriving at your destination.
- Purchase an extra car seat base if others will be transporting the baby.

### **Choking Prevention**

- Age grading or choking warnings on toys should be observed to avoid choking. Small balls and other spherical items or balloons are especially hazardous.
- Don't offer high risk foods. Don't give babies or young children hot dogs, chunks of meat or cheese, grapes, raw vegetables, or fruit chunks, unless they're cut up into small pieces. Don't give babies or young children hard foods, such as seeds, nuts, popcorn and hard candy.
- No gum or peanuts until age 4.
- Make sure infant/child is sitting upright while eating (not running around).

### **Most Common Hazards (from Consumer Product Safety Commission)**

- Food: Don't offer high-risk foods. Don't give babies or young children hot dogs, chunks of meat or cheese, grapes, raw vegetables, or fruit chunks, unless they're cut up into small pieces. Don't give babies or young children hard foods, such as seeds, nuts, popcorn and hard candy that can't be changed to make them safe options. Other high-risk foods include peanut butter, marshmallows and chewing gum.  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/infant-and-toddler-health/in-depth/infant-choking/art-20044661>
- Recalled products (subscribe to [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) email alerts).
- Powerful magnets, button batteries or liquid nicotine that can be ingested or inhaled and cause serious injury and death.
- Tipping furniture, TVs or appliances. Anchor furniture to the wall and mount TVs to the wall or anchor to anchored furniture.
- Windows and window coverings with cords. Use cordless window treatments only and keep crib or anything a baby may climb on away from windows. Use window locks to prevent opening wide.
- Water – anything from a bucket or toilet to a bathtub, pool or standing water can be a drowning hazard. Use layers of protection around water and always look first in a pool for a child who is missing. Pool and spa drains should have covers to prevent entrapment.

## General Injury Prevention

- Explore safety devices that are appropriate for your home.
- Set up changing table with all needed items within reach.
- Keep toilet seat down and bathroom door closed.
- Use door knob safety covers for garage, basement, bathrooms, doors to outside.
- Pick up clutter every evening and use night lights throughout house.
- Install smoke alarms with working batteries and have a fire escape plan for entire family.
- Install carbon monoxide detector with working batteries.
- Post phone numbers for Poison Control Center (800-222-1222) and pediatrician/family doctor on all phones.
- Use covered mugs for hot beverages.
- Use cabinet locks.
- Keep children away from hot stoves.
- Turn water faucet to cold before turning off so no one is surprised by hot water; set hot water heater no higher than 120 degrees.
- Look at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) and [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) for safety information and product recalls.
- In every situation, imagine what could possibly go wrong and take steps to prevent that from happening (i.e. baby could roll off changing table- remedy is to use safety strap and keep one hand on baby at all times).

## Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Being in a hurry, multi-tasking (common reason for falls down stairs).
- Being distracted by phone, email, visitors.
- Cluttered floors.
- Wet floors.
- Choosing inappropriate toys for age of child.
- Visiting homes that are not baby safe.
- Not fully supervising when out in public.

## Protect Parent's Mental Health

- Select a pediatrician; reach out to the nurses at the practice.
- Have emergency contact information easily accessible.
- Know the [signs of maternal depression](#) and ask for help.
- Get connected with supportive friends, family, and peers.
- Enlist the help of a qualified babysitter (use a [babysitter checklist](#)).
- Invest in keeping yourself and each other sane.
- No need to be a superhero – take one day at a time!
- Recommended websites: [www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org), [www.SafeKids.org](http://www.SafeKids.org)
- Review [Newborn Protection Act](#) and “Have a Plan.”

## Acknowledgments

### HVTF Child Safety Ad Hoc Group

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