

History and Guidelines of



An Initiative of SIDS of Pennsylvania

- SIDS of Pennsylvania exists to: 1) provide support to the families of SIDS victims and to those families whose children have been determined to be at high-risk for SIDS, 2) educate the general public and health professionals about SIDS and its effects, concentrating on reducing the risks of SIDS and accidental asphyxiation, and 3) promote and support research into the causes of the syndrome. SIDS of Pennsylvania became a 501(c) 3 organization and was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1994. Our Federal ID # is 25-1442806.
- In 1994 the federal government's national initiative "Back to Sleep" was introduced by the American Academy of Pediatrics. This campaign was funded through the National Institutes of Health and directed parents to put healthy infants on their backs (supine) to sleep rather than their tummies (prone). Since that time SIDS rates have been reduced by over 50%. Even with this reduction, however, SIDS remains the number 1 cause of infant mortality after the first month of age.
- In a Consumer Product Safety commission "Safe Sleep Campaign 2000" survey, findings revealed that only 31 percent of African American parents surveyed put their babies to sleep supine (on the back) as opposed to 43 percent of all parents. Moreover, it was found that more than 50 percent of sudden deaths among African-American infants occurred during bedsharing, with bedsharing occurring due to the perceived lack of funds to purchase a crib (Kemp, et al., 2000).
- Further research suggested that higher SIDS rates in low-income and African American communities may be attributable to high-risk bedsharing practices and that education about the risk associated with bedsharing should be coupled with the provision of cribs (Unger, et al., 2003).
- Being ahead of the research but armed with the knowledge that 5 infants in a 6-month period died in unsafe sleep environments in Allegheny County, the Cribs for Kids® Campaign originated in 1998 through the efforts of the District Attorney of Allegheny County, Stephen A. Zappala, Jr., the late Mayor Bob O'Connor, Gwen Elliott, a member of the Allegheny County Child Death Review Team, Dr. Cyril Wecht and Judith Bannon, Executive Director of SIDS of Pennsylvania. It is the first campaign of this kind in the country.

- The mission of Cribs for Kids® is to provide a comprehensive safe-sleep education program that includes the intervention of a safety-approved crib if the family cannot otherwise afford one. The overall goal is to decrease the number of infants dying from SIDS and accidental suffocation and to reduce the disparity between Caucasian and African-American infant mortality.
- So that we are assured that each Cribs for Kids® Program will be conducted under the guidelines that were established by the Cribs for Kids® Advisory Committee, SIDS of Pennsylvania has had the name Cribs for Kids® trademarked and has a Trademark License Agreement in place. This agreement specifies that any group participating in the Campaign will adhere to the American Academy of Pediatric's Safe-Sleep Guidelines of October 2005. Cribs for Kids® guidelines also specify:
 1. The infant must be under one year of age;
 2. If the participant is not a part of a research study, a letter of request is required stating the need for a safe sleep environment for the infant. The letter must also include a copy of the infant's newborn identification (footprints);
 3. Only a new safety-approved crib or Pack n Play will be given to the participants;
 4. Educational materials containing ways to reduce the risks of SIDS and accidental suffocation will be given with the crib; these materials will be supplied by 'Cribs for Kids' to assure that the safe-sleep message is uniform. The educational materials will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics' safe-sleep guidelines of October 2005.
- Cribs for Kids® was credited with the reduction of SIDS/Accidental Suffocation rates from 17 in 1998 to 6 in 2004 in Allegheny County. Our research and antidotal information have shown that Cribs for Kids® is the next step to Back to Sleep.
- In January 2004 a Cribs for Kids® Collaboration was formed between SIDS of PA, Inc. and 3 other Pennsylvania non-profit organizations: Maternity Care Coalition, Blair County Respiratory Disease Society and Westmoreland Human Opportunities, Inc. This collaboration was based on the success of the SIDS of Pennsylvania Cribs for Kids® Program.
- In January 2006, thanks to the success of the ever-expanding collaboration, Cribs for Kids® was named the exclusive distributor of the Graco Pack 'n Play for all commercial customers throughout the country. This enables Cribs for Kids® to provide this unit to our partners at the lowest possible price.
- In March 2006, with the establishment of our Cribs for Kids® Resource Center on the North Shore of Pittsburgh, Pitt-Ohio Express became partners with us by offering to ship our product to their service area (Mid Atlantic States) at no charge.
- In July 2006, Executive Director Judy Bannon, was asked to present the Cribs for Kids® Program at the 9th International SIDS Conference in Yokohama Japan. She has since received inquiries from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

- Because of the success of the Cribs for Kids® Program in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Cribs for Kids® Programs have been developed in 166 locations in 37 states throughout the country including 57 counties in Pennsylvania. Partners span the nation from Anchorage Alaska to New York City.
- As of November, 2007, the 10,000 infants who received a crib in Allegheny County lived to celebrate their first birthdays. Partners throughout the country report the same results.
- Cribs for Kids® hosted the First Annual Cribs for Kids® National Conference, ***Breaking the Cycle – A Safe Sleep Summit***, April 10 – 13, 2008 at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA. This groundbreaking conference brought over 200 people from across the country together who joined a national dialogue that addressed the importance of a safe sleep environment for infants and the need for accurate and consistent classification and coding of sudden unexplained infant deaths. This Safe-Sleep Summit was the first of its kind to bring experts, from both of these arenas, under one roof.
- Judith Bannon presented the successes of the Cribs for Kids® Program at the 10th International SIDS Conference in Portsmouth, England. Her presentation was touted as the ‘most innovative’ of the conference. Her abstract Update: *Cribs for Kids® - A Safe-Sleep Initiative*, will be published in *The Journal of Forensic Science, Medicine, and Pathology*.
- Cribs for Kids® hosted the Second National Cribs for Kids® Conference, Safe Sleep in 3-D, Defining, Defending and Disseminating the Infant Safe Sleep message, April 20 – 23, 2010 at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA. Close to 200 people from across the United States and Canada were in attendance.
- As of May, 2010, Cribs for Kids® partners number over 250 in 47 states.