WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

Being a grandparent is one of life’s great joys. Not only do you get to watch your grandbabies grow up, but you have the opportunity to share all your parenting experience with a new mom and dad. These new parents might turn to you for advice, like how to swaddle their new baby, what to do if the baby has a fever and how to put the baby to sleep safely. Newborn babies spend most of their time sleeping and a well-rested baby is a happy baby. Over time, recommendations for safe sleep have changed but it's important for all grandparents to have the latest information since they're looked to as experts. Some people might share different opinions with you, but the steps below are the safest.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Place your grandbaby on their back each time you put them to sleep. Health information has changed over time and we know a lot more about keeping babies safe while they sleep. Sleeping on tummies is not recommended.

• While young kids and adults might enjoy soft bedding or big, comfy pillows and blankets, babies need a firm sleep surface. Your grandbaby should sleep on a firm mattress covered by just a fitted sheet.

• When you put your grandbaby down to sleep on its back, make sure that you remove any toys, loose blankets or soft objects like stuffed animals from its crib or bassinet.

• Many new parents like to sleep with their new babies, but sharing a bed with a baby is not recommended. Encourage new parents to avoid bed sharing with their baby and explain that if they want to be close to their baby, they should put the bassinet near their bed.

• Just like adults, babies can get too hot when they sleep. Make sure the room your grandbaby is sleeping in is at a comfortable temperature and encourage new parents to dress them in just one layer more than what you would wear.

• Encourage new parents to avoid smoking.

• Share the latest safe sleep information with the new parents in your life to keep your grandbabies safe.

GETTING HELP

• Talk to your grandbaby’s pediatrician or contact the health department. They have people who can answer questions about safe sleep for new little ones.

• Talk to your family, friends, babysitters or anyone who might be caring for your grandbaby. Let them know about the safest way to put them down to sleep and be sure they understand what to do.

• If you have questions about safe sleeping for babies, talk to your grandbaby’s doctor. Pediatricians can help answer any questions you might have and the American Academy of Pediatrics has information about safe sleeping online at www.aap.org.