

INFANT and CHILD HEALTH

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Information, Support & Referral Program



What is the purpose of the program?

To provide new parents and infant caretakers in Georgia with specific health information about how to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). To link families who experience the death of a baby from SIDS or other unexpected reasons with community resources to assist them with their grief.

What does the program do?

Educates professionals and the general public about reducing the risk of SIDS and other infant death through:

- Placing babies to sleep on their backs and using firm bedding materials and safe cribs
- Maintaining an environment which is both free of smoke and provides proper temperature control for the child
- Promoting safe and healthy practices including breastfeeding, receiving proper prenatal care, and stopping smoking

Trains professionals about best practices including:

- Infant sleep safety requirements in day care centers
- Communicating SIDS risk reduction strategies to clients
- Support and referral of SIDS families by first responders, medical emergency staff, police, funeral directors, clergy and others.

Through a contract with the National SIDS Alliance, provides bereavement support to referred Georgia families experiencing an infant death.

How many people are helped by the program?

Risk reduction and prevention information targets all parents of newborns. In Georgia, 133,285 babies were born in 2002. Of these, 141 infants died from SIDS, and many of their families were assisted through the bereavement support program.

Why is the program important?

SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants between one month and one year of age. The back to sleep campaign has made a difference. The Georgia SIDS rate declined 21% since 1990, from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 births to 1.1 per 1,000 in 2002. The death rate among African American babies is still quite high at 1.4 deaths per 1,000 births. Challenges still remain, however. In 1997, only 38% of Georgia newborns (44.3% white, 25.7% black) were placed to sleep on their back, compared to 53% nationally.

Who benefits?

Georgia's parents and providers of services to infants benefit.

Outcome measures:

- Decrease the current infant mortality rate due to SIDS.
- Increase the percentage of Georgia babies who are placed to sleep on their backs.
- Decrease racial disparity between the percentages of black and white new mothers who report placing their infants to sleep on their backs.
- Increase the percentage of families experiencing infant deaths that are linked to support groups, peer contact, or other forms of support.

Legislative authority: The Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Act of 1974 (Federal)

For bereavement support or risk reduction training, contact:

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For information about public health programs to reduce infant death, contact:

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<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/sids/>

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