

# Guide to using the sleep space safety briefing card

The safety briefing card is a **quality** tool.

When used as intended, it fosters understanding, increases knowledge, builds confidence in parents, and empowers communities, so as to protect babies during sleep.

Please use the card to **guide your discussions** with families and meet a standard.



## breathing

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces protect babies' breathing and make bed-sharing safer.

### EXPLAIN

**How do babies get oxygen?** Through tubes; blood vessels in pregnancy and airways once born.

**Who is more vulnerable?** A baby with a weakened drive to breathe due e.g. to smoking in pregnancy, or being premature. Nicotine 'squeezes' blood vessels so less oxygen reaches unborn babies.

**How are babies different from adults?** Nose breathers, loose jaws, large heavy heads, bulge at back (nature's pillow) ...



## airways

**KEY POINT:** Lying flat, level and on the back protects babies' airways. It is easier for oxygen to get through to their lungs.

### EXPLAIN

**How can airways get blocked?** There are 4 ways that slow or stop oxygen flow through a babies' airways:

- a covered face (loose covers, pillows)
- a squished nose (wedged into gaps)
- a 'chin to chest' position of the neck
- pressure against a small chest

**Demonstrate and practice using the tube**

**Discuss airway hazards shown in pictures**



## sleep spaces

**KEY POINT:** Both Wahakura and Pēpi-Pod have specific design features for safety.

### EXPLAIN

**For Pēpi-Pod these are:** rigid shape, no assembly needed, portable, transparent with windows for reassurance, safety rules etched in, sheet system to prevent a covered face, merino blanket for warmth without weight, night-day symbols for head shape care, guides for adult pillows.

**How can sleep spaces protect babies?** They stop the joint action of 'smoking + bed-sharing' responsible for many SUDI.



## safe use

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces come with rules for their safe use.

### EXPLAIN

**Rule 1:** Always place your baby in their sleep space for **any and all sleeps** that are

- in or on adult beds
- on mattresses, couches or the floor
- when a makeshift bed is needed, or you are away from home.

**Rule 2:** Always place the sleep space flat level and low.

**Rule 3.** Supervise around toddlers and pets.



## sharing

**KEY POINT:** You have influence. Others can be supported by what you do and say.

### EXPLAIN

**We need help.** Campaigns and headlines may raise awareness of SUDI and safe sleep, but it is **conversations** with people we trust that leads to widespread change.

**Sleep spaces are not free.** In exchange for yours, we ask that you share with others your knowledge, experience and sleep space, so that other babies may sleep safely.

**Spread the word.** Use 'Your Tube' to show family and friends how babies can suffocate and how to protect them.



## package

**KEY POINT:** Risk and protection factors come as packages, not lists to select from.

### EXPLAIN

**Joint action.** Some risks act together making a new 'combo risk'. Smoking in pregnancy does this. When combined with bed-sharing, the risk escalates from 6 to 32 fold. 50% of SUDI have this combo risk.

**Protection is a package.** For example, sleep spaces can protect babies' breathing when bed-sharing, but not if babies are sleeping on their fronts. *On the back, face clear, in own space, with carer near*—that is the safe sleep package for younger babies.



## older babies

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces protect younger babies, but older babies need safe sleep, too.

### EXPLAIN

**Needs change.** From about 4months, babies start to roll from back to front and may be outgrowing their sleep spaces.

**Safe to wriggle.** Older babies love to wriggle, squirm and practice their moves. By their own actions, they may get into unsafe situations, but not out of them.

**Next bed discussion.** When you are asleep, your older baby can be safe in a cot, with just a mattress and sheet. They can be kept warm by extra clothing, not bedding.



## support

**KEY POINT:** It is dangerous for babies or young children to be in the hands of anyone who cannot keep them safe.

### EXPLAIN

**Who supports you?** It takes a whole village to raise a child. (*African Proverb*) So who do you trust to help care for your baby? Do they also understand safe sleep?

**Alcohol and drugs.** The brain slows down when people drink alcohol or take drugs. The affected person cannot think, move or make decisions in the usual way.

**Safe hands.** A person who can respond to a baby's needs for food, comfort or protection.

## Reference

Mitchell, E. A., Thompson, J. M., Zuccollo, J., MacFarlane, M., Taylor, B., Elder, D., ... & Lawton, B. (2017). The combination of bed sharing and maternal smoking leads to a greatly increased risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy: the New Zealand SUDI Nationwide Case Control Study. *The New Zealand Medical Journal (Online)*, 130(1456), 52. **Link:** <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2315/47f88da2ad9505952608f3683491288ba022.pdf>