

# Are safe sleep messages supportive of breastfeeding?

An examination of campaign materials from 15 major U.S. metropolitan areas

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# **PRESENTER DISCLOSURES**

**Nadine Peacock**

**The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

**No relationships to disclose**

# BACKGROUND

- NICHD's *Back To Sleep* campaign dramatically reduced sleep-related infant deaths by discouraging prone infant sleep.
- Revised AAP recommendations and *Safe to Sleep* campaign emphasize additional risk factors (e.g. bedsharing, unsafe sleep environments, cigarette smoke exposure) and protective factors (e.g. breastfeeding, room sharing, immunizations.)

# BACKGROUND

- Focus on breastfeeding and roomsharing (which supports breastfeeding) is important, particularly in AA communities characterized by both high SIDS/SUID rates and low breastfeeding rates.
- “Abstinence only” approach to mother-infant bedsharing and failure to emphasize roomsharing may act to discourage breastfeeding.

# SAFE SLEEP CAMPAIGN SCAN

## **Research questions:**

- Do safe sleep campaigns include a broad range of AAP recommendations?
- Are the campaign messages supportive of breastfeeding?
- If so, do they simply endorse breastfeeding, or also acknowledge challenges of combining breastfeeding and safe sleep?
- Are strategies offered for addressing those challenges?

# METHODS

- **City inclusion criteria**
  - Large population (>500,000)
  - Large AA population (>100,000 or >20% of population)
  - Safe sleep campaign active after release of 2011 AAP recommendations
- **Qualitative analysis of campaign documents**
  - Representative items examined for each city
  - Qualitative methods used to characterize message content

# RESULTS

15 cities met scan inclusion criteria:

- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Columbus, OH
- Detroit, MI
- Indianapolis, IN
- Jacksonville, FL
- Los Angeles, CA
- Milwaukee, WI
- Memphis, TN
- New York, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Dallas, TX
- Washington, DC

# SCAN RESULTS - AAP REC COVERAGE

City	B2S	AS	BS	BO	SF	SC	OH	RS	TT	BF	PA	AD	PNC
Dallas, TX	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None
Indianapolis, IN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Diluted	None	None	Full	Full
Charlotte, NC	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	Diluted	Full
Columbus, OH	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	None	Full
Philadelphia, PA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	None	None
Jacksonville, FL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	Diluted	None	Full	None
Boston, MA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	None	None
Detroit, MI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	None	None
Chicago, IL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	None	None
Memphis, TN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	Full	None	None	None
New York, NY	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None	Diluted	Full	None
Milwaukee, WI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None	None	Full	None
Washington, DC	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None	None	Diluted	None	None	None	None
Los Angeles, CA	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Diluted	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Baltimore, MD	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Diluted	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

**“ABC”**  
 - Supine sleep  
 - Appropriate surface  
 - No bedsharing  
 - No soft bedding/objects

Full
  “Diluted”
  None



# RESULTS - BREASTFEEDING

City	B2S	AS	BS	BO	SF	SC	OH	RS	TT	BF	PA	AD	PNC
Dallas, TX	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None
Indianapolis, IN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	Full	Full
Charlotte, NC	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Full
Columbus, OH	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	Full	None	Full
Philadelphia, PA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None
Jacksonville, FL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Full	Full	None
Boston, MA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None
Detroit, MI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Full	Full	None	None
Chicago, IL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	Full	None	None
Memphis, TN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None
New York, NY	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	Full	Full	None
Milwaukee, WI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	None	Full	None
Washington, DC	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None
Los Angeles, CA	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	None	Full	Full	None	None	None	None
Baltimore, MD	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Full	None	Full	Full	None	None	None	None

Breastfeeding

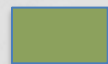
Full
  "Diluted"
  None

# BREASTFEEDING MESSAGES

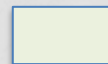
- **Full breastfeeding recommendation** – Only a third of the campaigns (5 of 15) explicitly recommended breastfeeding as protective against SIDS/SUID.
- **“Diluted” breastfeeding recommendation** – Another 2 recommended breastfeeding without indicating that it is protective against SIDS/SUID.
- **No breastfeeding recommendation**– The majority of campaigns (8 of 15) either mentioned breastfeeding without recommending it, or did not mention it at all.

# RESULTS - ROOMSHARING

City	B2S	AS	BS	BO	SF	SC	OH	BS	TT	BF	PA	AD	PNC
Dallas, TX	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	Full	Full	Full	None
Indianapolis, IN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	None	Diluted	None	Full	Full
Charlotte, NC	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	Full	None	Diluted	Full
Columbus, OH	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	None	Full	None	Full
Philadelphia, PA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	Full	None	None	None
Jacksonville, FL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	None	Diluted	Full	Full	None
Boston, MA	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	None	Full	None	None
Detroit, MI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	Full	Full	None	None
Chicago, IL	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	Full	None	Full	None	None
Memphis, TN	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Roomsharing	None	Full	None	None	None
New York, NY	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	None	None	Diluted	Full	None
Milwaukee, WI	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Roomsharing	None	None	None	Full	None
Washington, DC	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	None	None	Roomsharing	Diluted	None	None	None	None
Los Angeles, CA	Full	Full	Full	Full	None	Diluted	None	Roomsharing	None	None	None	None	None
Baltimore, MD	Full	Full	Full	None	Full	Diluted	None	Roomsharing	None	None	None	None	None



Full



"Diluted"



None

# ROOMSHARING MESSAGES

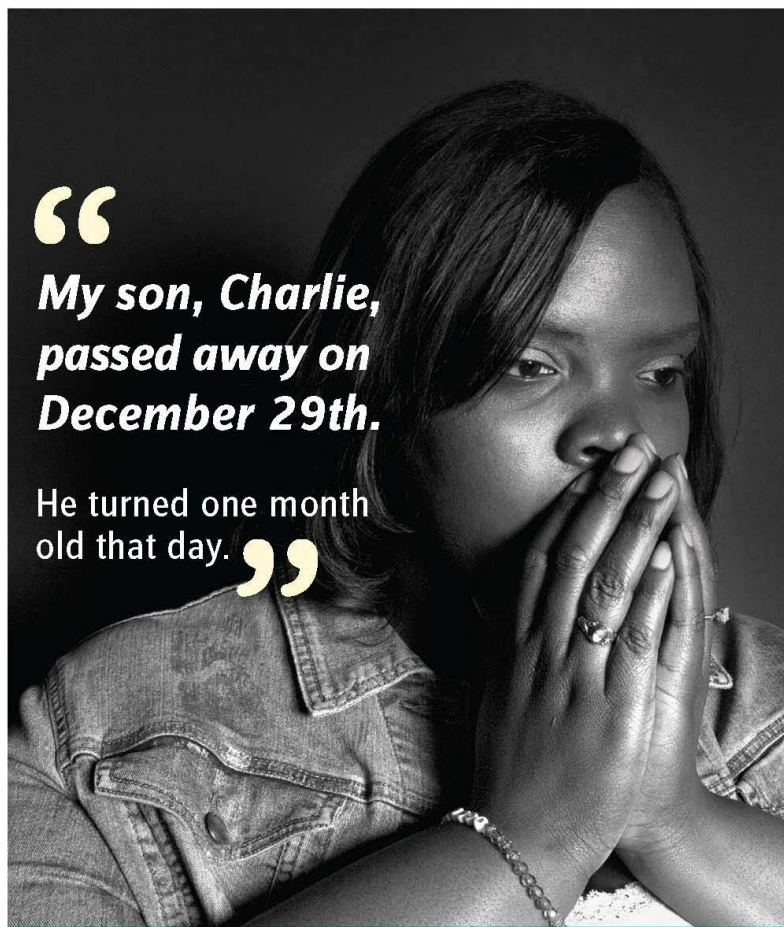
- **Full roomsharing recommendation**– Fewer than half of the campaigns (6 of 15) explicitly indicated that young infants should sleep in the parent’s room and that roomsharing is protective against sleep-related death.
- **“Diluted” roomsharing recommendation** – Another 5 campaigns used more ambiguous language (e.g. that infants should be where parents can hear them, or they should be “close”, or they *can* be in the parent’s room).
- **No roomsharing recommendation**– Four campaigns made no mention of room sharing.

# EXAMPLE 1

## NO BREASTFEEDING MENTION OR RECOMMENDATION

BALTIMORE, MD

“The safest way for you baby to sleep is alone, on his or her back, in an empty crib. Babies can suffocate if they sleep with an adult or another child, or if they sleep with blankets or pillows. Tell everyone who takes care of your baby to...”



“  
*My son, Charlie,  
passed away on  
December 29th.*

He turned one month  
old that day.”

*Knowing what I know now, Charlie would have slept in his crib that night instead of in our bed with us. I wish I could go back to that night and change it.*

The safest way for your baby to sleep is alone, on his or her back, in an empty crib. Babies can suffocate if they sleep with an adult or another child, or if they sleep with blankets or pillows. Tell everyone who takes care of your baby that you want your baby to

**SLEEP SAFE — Alone. Back. Crib. No exceptions.**

**B**more for  
**Healthy Babies.**  
*Every baby counts on you*

For more information, visit [www.HealthyBabiesBaltimore.com](http://www.HealthyBabiesBaltimore.com).  
Sponsored by the Office of Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blaise, Baltimore City Health Department,  
The Family League of Baltimore, and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

# EXAMPLE 2 EXPLICIT BREASTFEEDING RECOMMENDATION

CHARLOTTE, NC

“Breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS”

## Baby's Safe Sleep

Always put babies on their backs to sleep

- Use a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet.
- Remove toys, stuffed animals and pillows.
- Blanket should be no higher than the chest.
- No bumper pads or loose blankets.
- Keep face and head uncovered.
- Prevent overheating, dress baby in layers.
- Tuck a lightweight blanket in on three sides of the crib.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS.
- Babies should always sleep alone and in a crib.
- Keep cigarette smoke away from baby.

Take these steps to lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Infant Sleep Related Deaths.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[www.NCHealthyStart.org](http://www.NCHealthyStart.org) • [www.MamaSana.org](http://www.MamaSana.org)

HEALTHY START FOUNDATION  
NCDHHS  
North Carolina  
Public Health

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# EXAMPLE 3

## DILUTED ROOMSHARING RECOMMENDATION

BOSTON, MA

“Keep me *near* but  
in my own crib”

keep me safe  
while I sleep

ALWAYS PUT ME ON MY **BACK** TO SLEEP

MAKE SURE THERE ARE **NO TOYS** BLANKETS BUMPERS OR PILLOWS IN MY **CRIB**

**KEEP ME NEAR BUT IN MY OWN CRIB**

**NEVER SMOKE** AROUND ME

Research shows that children's brains grow rapidly during sleep  
Make sure that every sleep is a safe sleep

Learn more at [www.mass.gov/safesleep](http://www.mass.gov/safesleep)

## EXAMPLE 4 REALISTIC STRATEGY FOR BREASTFEEDING AND SAFE SLEEP??

CHICAGO, IL

“If you breastfeed in bed, soothe your baby back to sleep while standing and return her to her crib when she is asleep.”

### Silent killer: Sleep suffocation is the leading cause of reported child deaths in Illinois

Your baby should not sleep in a bed, couch or chair with anyone, even other children. If you breastfeed in bed, soothe your baby back to sleep while standing and return her to crib when she is asleep.

Always place your baby on his back to sleep.

Your baby should sleep in a crib with a firm mattress covered by a tightly fitted sheet. Babies die every week in Illinois while sleeping on adult beds, couches, pillows, blankets and other soft surfaces as well as in car seats, bouncy seats and infant swings.

Additional sleep safety tips:

1. Keep stuffed animals, toys, pillows, blankets, quilts, crib bumpers and sleep positioners out of your baby's crib.
2. Don't smoke before or after your baby is born, and don't let others smoke around your baby.
3. Try using a pacifier when placing your baby to sleep, but don't force it. If you are breastfeeding your baby, wait until he is one month old or is used to breastfeeding before using a pacifier.
4. Don't let your baby overheat during sleep. Dress her lightly for sleeping, and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.
5. Your baby needs plenty of supervised “tummy time” when he is awake to help build strong neck and shoulder muscles. Don't let your baby spend too much time in car seats, carriers and bouncers.
6. If you are having difficulty getting your baby to sleep, contact your pediatrician or the Fussy Baby Network at 1-888-431-BABY (2229).
7. Visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Crib Safety Information Center at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for sleep safety tips and a list of recalled products.

For more information, visit  
[www.DCFS.illinois.gov](http://www.DCFS.illinois.gov)



# CONCLUSIONS

- Safe sleep campaigns tend to focus on simple “ABC” messages at the expense of more comprehensive communications that address the full range of AAP recommendations.
- Both breastfeeding and roomsharing are among the least frequently mentioned strategies for preventing sleep-related infant deaths, even though they are strongly endorsed in the AAP recommendations.
- Few campaigns acknowledge the high probability that breastfeeding moms will fall asleep with their babies, and few suggest realistic strategies to minimize risk.
- The new safe sleep “National Action Plan” from NAPPSS, which highlights breastfeeding, is an encouraging development.

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**THANK YOU!**

**WE WELCOME YOUR QUESTIONS  
AND COMMENTS**

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