

For Immediate Release
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Illinois DCFS kicks off Safe Sleep Awareness Month in partnership with state agencies, hospitals and community groups

***Visuals: There will be two cribs with experts demonstrating how to create a safe sleep environment.*

CHICAGO, IL – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will join forces with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and leading hospitals and community groups to launch Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, a statewide prevention and education campaign aimed at reducing the risk of sleep related infant deaths by providing essential information that can help save the lives of children ages one and younger.

- WHO:** Marc D. Smith, Acting Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Dulce Quintero, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Service
IL State Representative Delia Ramirez (D-Chicago -4th District)
Juana Ballesteros, Manager, Community Public Health Outreach, Illinois Department
Public Health
Susan Gordon, VP of External Affairs, Lurie Children’s Hospital
Susan Wucka, Director, Maternal/Child Department, Norwegian American Hospital
Marty Castro, Interim President & CEO, Casa Central
- WHAT:** October is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month in Illinois. This year, DCFS will kick off the year-long campaign in Chicago with the state’s public health, human services and community leaders
- WHERE:** Casa Central, 1335 N. California Avenue, Auditorium 3rd floor, Chicago
- WHEN:** Monday, October 7, 2019 at 10 a.m.
- WHY:** Unsafe sleep is a leading cause of death for children one year old and younger. In 2018, 143 infants under the age of one died because of being put to sleep unsafely, including 61 in Cook County. DCFS is leading statewide efforts, in collaboration with

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the state's public health and human services agencies, health care institutions and community groups, to launch a year-long awareness campaign and help spread the word about how parents and others who take care of children can create a safe sleep environment for infants.

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.

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