



Bruce Rauner
Governor

George H. Sheldon
Acting Director

October 5, 2015
For Immediate Release

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Governor Rauner Proclaims October Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month

148 infants died due to sleep-related deaths between 2009 and 2014

COLLINSVILLE, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Southern Illinois Child Death Investigation Task Force (CDITF) are joining forces to help prevent sleep-related infant deaths in southern Illinois. Representatives will hold a press event at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6 at the Doubletree by Hilton, 1000 Eastport Plaza Drive, in Collinsville.

“Our shared message is that caregivers must know and practice the ABCs of Safe Sleep: A baby should sleep **alone**, on his or her **back**, in a safe **crib** – with no exceptions,” says George H. Sheldon, acting director of DCFS. “The mattress should be firm, the sheet should fit tightly and there shouldn’t be anything else in the crib, including pillows, blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals and toys.”

From 2009 to 2014, Illinois lost 148 infants due to sleep-related deaths. In a majority of these cases, the child was less than a year old, with the average age being 72 days old. Experts believe accidental sleep-related deaths are severely under-reported in Illinois and around the country.

“Infant sleep-related deaths are some of the most heart-wrenching to investigate because many are preventable,” says Colonel Joseph A. Edwards, CDITF commander and Columbia, IL chief of police. “Although it might be convenient, do not place your infant to sleep on couch or in a car seat; and most importantly, never place your infant or small child in harm’s way by allowing him or her to sleep in your bed.”

This year, Governor Bruce Rauner has proclaimed October as “Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month” in Illinois. DCFS’ month-long prevention and education campaign, aimed at reducing one of the leading causes of death for children ages one and younger includes a wall exhibit that will be displayed in public areas around the state illustrating the loss of life across Illinois.

To listen to the public service announcements, click this link: [Safe Sleep Audio PSA 2015](#)

DCFS receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child.

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