

For Immediate Release
September 29, 2022

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**October is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month:
Illinois DCFS and Pace Bus team up to raise awareness**
Informational cards to be featured in 669 buses operating across suburban Chicago

(CHICAGO) – Unsafe sleep is a leading cause of death for children 1 year old and younger; and during Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, Illinois DCFS and Pace Bus are joining forces to share safe sleep messages about the dangers of using crib bumpers on busses visible to tens of thousands of daily riders across the Chicago suburbs.



According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were 113

infant deaths associated with crib bumpers between 1990 and 2019. The Safe Cribs Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden in May, makes it unlawful to manufacture, sell or distribute padded bumpers that line the inside of a crib.

“Infant deaths as a result of unsafe sleep are tragic and entirely preventable,” said **Governor JB Pritzker**. “This Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, I am thrilled that Illinois DCFS is partnering with Pace Bus to spread the message about safe sleep guidelines. These are the kinds of unique coalitions that make our communities safer and healthier – one message at a time.”

It’s imperative that not only parents, but anyone who takes care of infants, including grandparents, friends and babysitters, learn and follow the ABCs of safe sleep. Infants should always sleep alone; on their backs; and in a safe crib,” said **Illinois DCFS Director Marc D. Smith**. “Following these simple steps and removing bumpers and other items from cribs will save infants; and I thank Pace Bus for helping us share this important message with their ridership.”



In 2019, 45 infants in Cook County under the age of 1 died as a result of being put to sleep unsafely. 35 were found in locations other than a crib, bassinet or 'pack and play;' 15 were found in positions other than on their back; 41 were found with soft bedding in their sleep space; and 22 were co-sleeping with another individual at the time of death.

"Pace's priorities are simple – provide safe and reliable service for the communities we serve," said **Pace Board Chairman Richard Kwasneski**. "Partnering with other agencies that work towards similar goals of community safety is our pleasure."

The safe sleep message will appear on 669 buses operating across suburban Chicago until December 2023.

Infants sleep safest alone in a crib with a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheet. The crib should be free of pillows, blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals and toys. Infants should never be placed on an adult bed or couch to sleep. If parents of young children are traveling, they should call ahead to make sure their accommodations include a crib and bring a 'pack and play' if one is not available.

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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