



California Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Advisory Council

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Recommendation of the California SIDS Advisory Council to the California Department of Public Health on Baby Boxes May 25, 2017

Baby Boxes have been recommended as a safe sleep environment for infants to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)¹. These are cardboard boxes, which have the potential to provide a firm base, with a firm mattress inserted, without other objects in the crib or apparent risks. Some countries and local health jurisdictions in the U.S. have distributed these to families to reduce the risk of SIDS.

In some cases, advertising has suggested that *Baby Boxes* are safer than Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) approved cribs or bassinets, and that they should be used *instead*. However, there have been no studies to indicate their safety or efficacy compared to CPSC approved cribs, bassinets, etc. Therefore, *Baby Boxes* should not be recommended *instead* of CPSC approved cribs and bassinets. *Baby Boxes* appear to be reasonably safe, and they may be an alternative for families who can not provide a safe sleep environment. Local health jurisdictions may consider distributing these to such families. The CPSC has not yet evaluated *Baby Boxes* for safety, nor have they set forth standards for their construction or use.

There are some cautions about using *baby Boxes*:

- *Baby Boxes* come with a cardboard lid. Babies should not be placed in a *Baby Box* with the lid on.

¹ Many terms are used to describe babies who die suddenly and unexpectedly during sleep in whom the cause can not be determined. These terms include SIDS, SUID, SUDI, Undetermined, and some accidental diagnoses. In this recommendation, the term "SIDS" or "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" will be used to describe all of these babies. These terms all mean the same thing: the death was *unexpected* and *unexplained*.

- Baby Boxes are small, and may be adequate for an infant up to ~3-months of age, but families will have to have another arrangement after that age.
- Baby Boxes should be placed on the floor, and not on dressers, beds, or other places where they could fall potentially injuring a baby inside.

It has been suggested that the low SIDS rate in Finland is due to the widespread use of Baby Boxes. However, there have been no studies to show that the low SIDS rate is due to Baby Boxes.

The California SIDS Advisory Council recommends that the California Department of Public Health neither endorse nor oppose the use of Baby Boxes as one way to achieve a safe infant sleeping environment at this time. Based on current evidence, Baby Boxes should not be promoted as something to be used *instead* of CPSC approved cribs or bassinets. However, they can be distributed to families who can not otherwise provide a safe infant sleep environment.



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