

Professional to Professional

PLAN NOW FOR OCTOBER SIDS AWARENESS MONTH

October is SIDS Awareness Month. Some of you may already have ideas about what activities and events you plan to undertake in your community. If you have not yet begun planning your October SIDS activities, here are some suggestions for promoting SIDS Awareness Month. The following are suggestions, but they may trigger more creative ideas in you and your co-workers. A “brain storming” session can bring out unique ideas and approaches for promoting SIDS risk reduction awareness activities. Most of the activities will require a great deal of time and commitment on your part, so it is best to begin planning early.

- Work with your local cable television channel (s) and radio stations to air public service announcements (PSAs) about SIDS risk reduction. PSAs are a great way to spread information.
- Ask your local cable television channel (s) or radio station (s) to interview you and/or a SIDS parent about SIDS. Consider using a crib and baby to show the do’s and don’ts of the *Back to Sleep* recommendations for TV spots.
- Hold a press conference to declare October SIDS Awareness Month and “unveil” your SIDS risk reduction activities/special event(s).
- Prepare a newspaper article for your local newspaper. Many newspapers have a community news section.
- Have your local Board of Supervisors proclaim October SIDS Awareness Month.
- Identify the diaper companies in your community and ask them to include SIDS risk reduction materials, such as *Back to Sleep* doorknob hangers, brochures, magnets, etc., with their diaper orders for October.
- Conduct a SIDS training/workshop for childcare providers, foster parents, and/or grandparents.
- Approach organizations of which you are a member and volunteer to address the membership on SIDS risk reduction. Adult meetings of Scout organizations, sororities, PTA groups, church groups—you can find an audience in a variety of memberships.
- Visit the Childcare Resource and Referral Agency in your community and provide them with a variety of SIDS risk reduction materials.
- Identify the licensed child care facilities in your community, then make a visit to leave SIDS materials. Provide them with *Babies Sleep on Their Backs Here* mini-posters and *Taking Care of a Baby* informational sheets.
- Participate in local health fairs, community education programs, or similar events. Check with your regional DSS Child Care Advocate to see if there are any childcare conferences/workshops taking place in October. Then, provide a SIDS inservice and/or display SIDS risk reduction materials.
- Write a SIDS article for various agencies that provide maternal and child health services within your community and publish it in their newsletter.
- Identify foster care agencies in your community, then plan a SIDS inservice for the foster care workers and/or foster parents who care for young infants. Or, consider a site visit to distribute SIDS risk reduction materials.
- Provide your local Department of Social Services district offices with SIDS materials and posters for their lobby areas.
- Ask local businesses that sell baby products, clothing, and/or room furnishings to give SIDS risk reduction materials to customers during the month of October. You might also consider having a small table in the baby department and provide SIDS risk reduction materials and answer questions for new parents and expectant women. A doll in a bed that meets the *Back to Sleep* guidelines is a good way to attract their attention.
- Visit your community hospitals with birthing units and newborn nurseries and provide them with SIDS materials for distribution to parents of newborns. This could be a good opportunity to provide an inservice to nursing staff on SIDS risk reduction and reinforce the role hospital nurses play in modeling back sleeping.
- Work with other health department programs (i.e. immunizations, WIC, CHDP, CPSP, BIH, AFLP, Field Nursing, Vital Statistics, Well Baby Clinics, Prenatal Clinics, etc.) to distribute SIDS risk reduction materials to pregnant women and parents with newborns.
- Coordinate a SIDS Sunday in October with local churches and ask clergy to distribute SIDS risk reduction materials to members with newborns, pregnant women, and others who care for infants.
- Set up a SIDS display in a local business such as a beauty shop or the lobby of your health department, vital statistics department or other places where pregnant women and new mothers may visit.
- Conduct a SIDS risk reduction class for pregnant teens and/or high school students who baby sit infants or your local La Leche organization.

You probably have identified several different areas to approach or activities to consider, just while you were reading the above suggestions. Be creative...use your imagination and come up with your own SIDS risk reduction activity or special event!

—Article by: Janet Allen, RN,BSN, Training Coordinator, California SIDS Program