



## Safe Sleep Practices at the Center of the ABCs of Safe ZZZ's

*Coalition launches targeted effort to reduce sleep-related deaths of infants in Duval County*

**Jacksonville, Fla.** (May 1, 2024) – Seventy-eight babies have died over the past five years (2018-2022) in Duval County due to unsafe sleeping conditions, most of which were preventable. Although the number of babies dying in their sleep declined when the American Academy of Pediatrics launched its Back to Sleep campaign in 1992, numbers of sleep-related deaths have been steadily increasing. In 2022, nearly 22 percent of infant deaths in Duval were sleep related; the most common cause being babies accidentally suffocated by bedding or another person while bedsharing.

As the convener of our community's efforts to give babies the healthiest start possible, the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (NEFHSC) is launching the "ABCs of Safe ZZZ's," a social marketing campaign funded by the Kids Hope Alliance that seeks to encourage parents, caregivers and siblings to know and implement the ABCs of safe sleep practices: for every sleep, babies should be placed Alone, on Back and in a Crib.

"Safe sleep practices aren't just guidelines; they're a cornerstone of nurturing a child's well-being," said Faye Johnson, CEO of the NEFHSC. "Providing a safe sleep environment by knowing the ABCs of safe sleep isn't just about protecting their physical safety; it's about safeguarding their future. The NEFHSC, in partnership with the city of Jacksonville and many others, are working to ensure more families are aware of the dangers of co-sleeping and unsafe bedding."

In addition to being put to sleep in an adult bed, sofa or car seat, many infants are still being put to sleep on their tummies or sides with bumper pads, pillows and stuffed animals, sleep positioners and similar items. NEFHSC encourages parents and family members to take advantage of the organization's free safe sleep training as well as the resources available at [abcsofsafezzzs.org](http://abcsofsafezzzs.org). The Coalition also offers in-depth safe sleep training to community agencies upon request.

"Although the ABCs of Safe ZZZ's campaign targets Duval County, our organization has always been focused on ensuring families across Northeast Florida understand the risk of sleeping with their babies," Johnson said. "Trust me, I know it's hard when you're sleep deprived and just want to cuddle until the baby falls asleep, but the dangers are there and very real."

The ABCs of Safe ZZZ's, through community outreach, digital advertising and social media, aims to create understanding about the preventable causes of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) syndrome while encouraging parents, family members and caretakers to watch safe sleep videos, talk to their pediatricians and enroll in safe sleep training. NEFHSC also has a wide range of free community programs and services across its five county service area including one-on-one care coordination, home visits, father-specific programs and other resources.

### **About the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition**

The NEFHSC leads the community effort to reduce infant deaths and improve the health of children, childbearing women, fathers and their families in Northeast Florida. For more information, view [our media kit](#). For information about the ABCs of Safe ZZZ's, go to [www.abcsofsafezzzs.org](http://www.abcsofsafezzzs.org) or contact Lisa Luther at 904.536.9957 or [lisa@createaruckus.com](mailto:lisa@createaruckus.com).