

The ABCs of Safe Sleep Can Be Hard to Learn

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When I was a pediatric resident in my continuity clinic, I often suspected that much of the medical advice that I doled out to parents was easier said than done. I would counsel parents that sometimes you need to try introducing certain foods many times before your toddler will accept a new taste or texture, all the while feeling thankful that I wouldn't be the one dodging fistfuls of cauliflower during these repeated attempts. After my daughter was born and I started navigating the many challenges of

parenthood myself, I developed an even stronger appreciation for how there is often a gap between what is medically advised and what seems doable in the day-to-day life of raising a child. One area where this was particularly apparent was in the realm of developing safe sleep habits for my daughter. During her first few weeks after birth, she would fall asleep so readily in our arms but invariably wake up crying as we oh-so-delicately lowered her into her bassinet. In these early days, I found myself cradling my daughter late in the night while Googling different (and often expensive) “safe sleep” bassinets, white noise machines, and polling all of my friends about how they managed to convince their babies to sleep on a firm surface. I felt silly that as a pediatrician myself, I was finding this so difficult.

But ultimately, the most helpful conversation that I had was with our daughter's pediatrician at our 2-week check-up. In a non-judgmental way, he was able to talk me through the evidence behind the AAP's safe sleep recommendations and acknowledge that my struggles were not uncommon, that it can be *hard* for babies to become accustomed to sleeping alone and on their back in a crib. With his support and advice, my husband and I pushed through a couple of difficult weeks and eventually found the right cocktail of swaying, rocking, and soothing that worked for us and helped my daughter to stay asleep in her bassinet. This month's *Pediatrics in Review* features [a review article that discusses in detail the all-important topic of safe sleep in the context of prevention recommendations for SIDS](#). After finishing this article, readers will know the evidence behind the AAP's safe sleep recommendations and feel comfortable supporting families and guiding them in discussions about how they can best incorporate the AAP's recommendations for a safe sleep environment into their day-to-day life.

- [Mediators of Improved Adherence to Infant Safe Sleep Using a Mobile Health Intervention](#)
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