

## TWO CULTURE BASED EXAMPLES

To prevent SIDS and other injuries, these two very different cultures came up with similar solutions.

### Maori

In New Zealand, the Maori experience the greatest number of SIDS deaths. As a solution, Maori weavers began making woven flax baskets, known as wahakura, for newborn infants to sleep in. These baskets prevent overlay, suffocation, and allow for safe co-sleeping with family. The baby has its own special sleep surface on the adult sized bed. The Maori have cut the number of SIDS deaths by 1/3 in just 4 years!



### Finland

Finland used to have a lot of poverty and sudden infant death. The Finnish government began giving expecting parents a cardboard box of baby supplies to make sure these children had the basic necessities. The box was meant to be the baby's first bed (don't worry it's a cute box!) Over the years, Finland's rate of SIDS had dropped to almost zero! These are two creative ways of making your baby extra safe while sleeping.



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13 March 2016

## SLEEPING SAFELY WITH BABY

*Making safety advice work for  
your child and family*



## PUTTING THE SAFETY PUZZLE TOGETHER

Many parents sleep in the same bed or room as their infants and small children. This is called co-sleeping. There is nothing wrong with co-sleeping. However, this pamphlet contains ideas for making sure a baby's sleep location is as safe as possible. Now you can have the knowledge to improve safety for your sleeping child.

Babies are growing on the inside and out. Their brains are learning to control their bodies. Young children under one year of age are vulnerable to risks in their immediate home environment. Consider the following small changes to the sleep environment to increase safety for your child. Which ones are relevant for your family?

Possible injuries during sleep include getting stuck in bed frame (entrapment), suffocation of infants due to overlay (wedged against or under a larger person), and unexplained sudden infant death (SIDS).

SIDS is something everyone fears but is quite rare. There is actually a greater risk of suffocation or entrapment than of sudden infant death. Native communities have higher rates of infant death and injury as well as sudden infant death. The following safety information is meant to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocation, entrapment and overlay.

**Baby should be placed on their back.** This single measure has been credited with cutting SIDS rates in half!

**Mattress or sleep surface should be firm** and include **no extra bedding, no pillows or extra blankets.**

**Couches and chairs are often too soft** to be safe for baby.

**Pull bed away from the walls and remove the bed's frame** to prevent small children from getting stuck.

If you use a **crib, place it bedside** rather than in a different room. Babies who sleep near an adult receive brain stimulus to wake and breathe more often.

**Breastfeeding naturally protects** infants from SIDS by strengthening their bodies

## A SERIOUS QUESTION

Did you know that an infant sleeping with a parent who smokes cigarettes increases the chance of sudden infant death?

If you or your partner use alcohol, drugs, even cigarette smoking, there should be a separate sleeping space for baby. Sleeping separately can mean baby is bedside or on the bed, but in a special basket or box. Research shows that drug or alcohol use increases risk of injury and death in the sleeping space. Please consider ending your cigarette, drug or alcohol use and refer to examples of separate sleep spaces below and on the following page.



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Cradleboards were once a common support for babies, sleeping or awake. Picture from Vashon Island, WA.