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Illinois DCFS, IDPH and Safe Kids Illinois partner with public transit agencies across Illinois to promote Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month

New placards with safe sleep messages to be featured on 1,000 buses operating across Illinois

(CHICAGO) – October is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Safe Kids Illinois are partnering with public transit agencies across the state to share a simple, lifesaving message with parents and caregivers when it's time for an infant to sleep – **give them room to breathe.**



New safe sleep placards will be displayed on approximately 1,000 buses across Illinois, bringing this important message to tens of thousands of Illinoisians each day. Unsafe sleep practices are a leading cause of death for infants across the United States, with 124 Illinois infants losing their lives before their first birthday in 2025. These tragic, and often preventable, deaths frequently stem from accidental suffocation due to infants being placed to sleep somewhere other than a crib or bassinet; sharing an adult bed; or sleeping with soft bedding, pillows or other items in the crib.

“Helping parents and caregivers protect the safety and well-being of children is at the heart of everything we do,” said **Illinois DCFS Director Heidi E. Mueller**. “The safest way for infants to sleep is alone, on their backs and in an empty crib, giving them the space they need to breathe. I am grateful to every mass transit agency helping us share this lifesaving message with riders across Illinois. Together, we can help prevent the heartbreaking loss of infant lives.”

Pace Bus, serving the Chicago metropolitan area, has partnered with Illinois DCFS since 2019 to promote safe sleep practices to their ridership by displaying placards with safe sleep messages on their fleet of 669 buses. This year, the campaign is expanding to additional transit agencies across Illinois, including:

- Stateline Mass Transit District serving Roscoe, Rockton and South Beloit and Roscoe and Rockton townships in Winnebago County
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- City of DeKalb Public Transit

- Connect Transit Bloomington-Normal
- Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
- Shawnee Mass Transit District serving Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski and Union counties

"Safe sleep practices are among the most important steps parents can take to protect their babies. When putting an infant to sleep, make sure they are alone, in their own crib or bassinet, and away from pillows or other items," said **IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra**. "We are proud to partner with our sister agencies and mass transit systems across Illinois to deliver this important message to prevent unsafe sleep: give our kids room to breathe."

"It is critical for parents and caregivers to place their infants to sleep in a safe crib, alone and on their backs so they have room to breathe," said **Safe Kids Illinois Coordinator Amy Hill**. "Safe Kids Illinois is committed to working with DCFS and IDPH to promote safe sleep education to reduce infant sleep related deaths, and we thank every mass transit agency that is joining us in this effort."

To help prevent accidental sleep suffocation, DCFS urges parents and caregivers to follow guidelines recommended by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), including:

- Place infants on their backs to sleep in their own sleep space with no other people. Room sharing is fine; bed sharing can be deadly.
- Use a crib, bassinet or portable play yard with a firm, flat mattress and a fitted sheet.
- Keep the sleep space empty. Remove pillows, bumper pads, blankets and toys.
- Never place an infant to sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or chair, in an infant swing or in a car seat (except while riding in a car).

To view and print the new graphic and for more safe sleep information and resources, visit the [Sleep Safety page on the DCFS website](#).

***About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** - Our vision is for every child and youth in Illinois to grow and thrive in a loving family. To achieve this goal, DCFS promotes the safety and well-being of children, youth, and families by responding to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect and providing family-centered care and connection to resources to strengthen families and keep children safely at home. Our values – family focused, integrity, respect, empathy and equity – are at the forefront of every decision we make to ensure children are safe and families have the resources they need to succeed. To make an anonymous report of suspected child abuse or neglect, visit childabuse.illinois.gov.*

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