

## "Unsafe Sleeping" can kill babies

The FL Department of Children and Families (DCF) cites unsafe sleeping practices as one of the leading causes of death for children younger than one. Unsafe sleeping would include sleeping in bed with an adult or other siblings, sleeping on their tummy, having pillows, toys or heavy blankets in the crib, or the infant sleeping on a couch or chair instead of a crib, cradle or bassinet. In Orange County alone there were 14 deaths identified last year as due to unsafe sleeping, and that is very likely to be a low estimation, according to John Cooper, regional director of DCF.

Well meaning advice from grandmothers and others is often based on old knowledge or wives tales, so it is imperative we get the new, more accurate information out that babies should be placed on their "backs to sleep and on their tummy to play", as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Since it is the most tragic of events when parents lose a child, especially if it could have been prevented, the Health Council of East Central Florida and Orange County Healthy Start are planning an initiative with Orlando Health, Florida Hospital and Health Central to give every infant born in Orange County a onesie that says "this side up" in a packet they will take home from the hospital, that will also include safe sleep information as well as other health information. This project has been funded by "100 Women Strong", a giving circle of the Center for Women's Philanthropy/Community Foundation of Central Florida.

For more information on this project or safe sleep practices, contact Karen van Caulil (407-977-1610) or Linda Sutherland (407-741-5240).