

# Guide to using the Pēpi-Pod safety briefing card

The safety briefing card is a **quality** tool.

When used as intended, it fosters understanding, increases knowledge, builds confidence in parents, and empowers communities to protect babies during sleep.

Please use the card to **guide your discussions** with families and meet a standard.



## breathing

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces protect babies' breathing and make bed sharing safer.

### EXPLAIN

**How do babies get oxygen?** Through tubes - blood vessels before birth and airways after.

**Who is more vulnerable?** A baby with a weakened 'wake-up' response to low oxygen. This develops from conditions before birth - like nicotine exposure - which reset how babies respond to low oxygen and can continue after birth.

**How are babies different from adults?** Nose breathers, loose jaws, large heavy heads, bulge at back (nature's pillow) ...



## airways

**KEY POINT:** Lying flat, level, and on the back protects babies' airways. It is easier for oxygen to flow to their lungs.

### EXPLAIN

**How can airways get blocked?** There are 4 ways that slow or stop oxygen flow through babies' airways:

- a covered face (loose covers, pillows)
- a pinched nose (wedged into gaps)
- a chin-to-chest position of the neck
- pressure against a small chest

**Demonstrate and practice using the tube**

NB: Explain that this is a teaching tool. It is not for use on babies.

**Discuss airway hazards shown in pictures**



## sleep space

**KEY POINT:** Pēpi-Pod sleep spaces have specific safety features.

### EXPLAIN

**These are:** portable, strong, rigid shape, no assembly needed, transparent, windows for reassurance, safety rules etched in, sheet system to prevent a covered face, merino blanket for warmth without weight, night-day symbols for head shape care, markings for adult pillow placement.

**How can sleep spaces protect babies?** They stop the joint action of smoking + bed sharing responsible for most SUDIs.



## safe use

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces come with rules for their safe use.

**Rule 1:** Use the sleep space for **all** sleeps where your baby might otherwise be:

- in, or on, an adult bed
- on a mattress, couch, or on the floor
- in a makeshift bed, or when away from home
- sharing a bed with others

**Rule 2:** Always place the sleep space flat, level, and low. In adult beds, place near the top end and away from the sides, as shown.

**Rule 3.** Supervise around toddlers and pets.



## sharing

**KEY POINT:** You have influence. People notice what you do and say.

### EXPLAIN

**We need your help.** Campaigns may raise awareness, but it's conversations with those we know and trust that strengthen communities and drive real change.

**Sleep spaces are not free.** In exchange for yours, please share your knowledge, experience, and sleep space with others, so that more babies can sleep safely.

**Spread the word.** The *Your Tube* resource can help you demonstrate airway safety to others and talk about what *easy to breathe* means for babies.



## package

**KEY POINT:** Risk and protection factors come as packages, not lists to select from.

### EXPLAIN

**Joint action.** Some SUDI risks combine to create a heightened **combo risk** e.g. exposure to smoking/vaping during pregnancy + bed sharing. This **combination** is linked to most SUDI deaths escalating risk from **2** to **32** times\*.

**Protection is a package.** Sleep spaces can help protect more vulnerable babies when bed sharing, but only e.g. if babies sleep on their backs, not fronts.

**More vulnerable babies.** *On the back, face clear, own space, carer near* - that is the safe sleep package for more vulnerable babies.



## older babies

**KEY POINT:** Sleep spaces protect younger babies, but older babies need safe sleep, too.

### EXPLAIN

**Needs change.** From about 4 months, babies start to roll from back to front and will outgrow their sleep spaces.

**Safe to explore.** As babies become more mobile, they wriggle about and explore their surroundings. They may get into unsafe situations they cannot get out of.

**Next bed discussion.** To safeguard a more vulnerable older baby, parents could consider a bare cot with only mattress and sheet - no bedding - and adjust **clothing** layers as needed for their baby's comfort.



## support

**KEY POINT:** It is dangerous for babies or young children to be in the hands of anyone who cannot keep them safe.

### EXPLAIN

**Who supports you?** It takes a whole village to raise a child (*African Proverb*). So, who do you trust to help care for your baby - and do they understand safe sleep?

**Alcohol and drugs.** The brain slows down when people drink alcohol or take drugs. The affected person cannot think, move or make decisions in the usual way.

**Safe hands.** At all times, babies need a responsible and sober adult to respond to their needs for food, comfort or protection.

### \*Reference

Mitchell, E. A., Thompson, J. M., Zuccollo, J., MacFarlane, M., Taylor, B., Elder, D., ... & Law-ton, B. (2017). The combination of bed sharing and maternal smoking leads to a greatly in-creased risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy: the New Zealand SUDI Nationwide Case Control Study. *The New Zealand Medical Journal* (Online), 130(1456), 52. Link: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2315/47f88da2ad9505952608f3683491288ba022.pdf>