



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

Infant and Toddler Safe Sleep Practices Tip Sheet

New rule, [WAC 170-300-0291](#) focuses on promoting healthy, safe sleep practices for enrolled infants and toddlers. This section requires early learning providers to:

- Actively supervise napping or sleeping infants or toddlers.
 - "**Active supervision**" or "**actively supervise**" means focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times. An early learning provider must position themselves to observe all children: Watching, counting, and listening at all times. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what a child may do, and get involved or redirect children if necessary. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers must be supervised at all times including daily routines such as sleeping, eating, changing diapers, or using the bathroom.
- Follow current American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations concerning safe sleep practices including SIDS/SUIDS risk reduction. See <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Safe-Sleep-Recommendations-to-Protect-Against-SIDS.aspx>.
- Place an **infant** to sleep on his or her back.
 - If an **infant** turns over while sleeping, the early learning provider must return the **infant** to his or her back until the **infant** is able to independently roll from back to front and front to back.
 - This developmental skill can be observed when an **infant** is awake or asleep.
- Sufficiently light the room to be able to observe infant or toddler skin color in case of changes.
- Monitor breathing patterns of infants and toddlers through visual observation, and note any changes.
- Allow infants and toddlers to follow their own sleep patterns.
 - Infants and toddlers need to sleep when they are tired and not according to a schedule determined by the early learning provider.
- Do not allow **loose** blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, crib bumpers, and similar items inside an occupied crib, bassinet, or other equipment where **infants** commonly sleep.
 - Infant sleep clothing, such as a sleep sack or pajamas, is preferable to keep the infant warm while reducing the chance of head covering.



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- Swaddling should be snug around the chest but allow ample room at the hips and knees to avoid hip dislocation or hip dysplasia.
- When an infant exhibits signs of attempting to roll, swaddling should no longer be used.

- Do not allow a blanket or any other item to cover or drape over an **occupied** crib, bassinet, or other equipment where **infants** commonly sleep.
 - Items draped over a crib impair an early learning provider's ability to see and hear the infant.
 - Draped items could fall on top of infant creating a risk of suffocation or entanglement.

- Do not allow a blanket, bedding, or clothing to cover any portion of an infant's or toddler's head or face while sleeping, and readjust these items when necessary.
 - Blankets or clothing covering an infant or toddler's head could impact their ability to breathe.

- Prevent infants or toddlers from getting too warm while sleeping. A good rule of thumb is to dress an infant or toddler in one more layer of clothing than you are wearing to be comfortable in the same environment.
 - Signs that an infant or toddler is too warm or in distress include, but are not limited to:
 - Sweating
 - Flushed, pale, or hot and dry skin, warm to the touch
 - A sudden rise in temperature
 - Vomiting
 - Refusing to drink
 - Depressed fontanelle
 - Irritability

NOTICE: The information herein is not binding law but is merely provided for general guidance. Consult the currently enacted Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for applicable rules and regulations.