

Allowing Babies to Play on Their Front

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As an Infant Massage Teacher and Trainer I often stress the importance of parents continuing to sleep their babies on the back in order to reduce the risk of cot death, however, I also talk about the importance of allowing babies time for supervised front play.

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID) is backing a new campaign: Sleep on the back - play on the front. The campaign encourages parents to keep sleeping their babies on their backs, but also allow for plenty of tummy time when their babies are awake to assist with healthy muscle development.

To support the campaign they have produced a new leaflet 'Sleep on the back, play on the front', which highlights the key baby safety message to parents that they must continue to sleep their babies on their backs in order to reduce the risk of cot death, and it explains the importance of supervised front play. It also gives parents tips for 'tummy' time activities, but as many of us know, infant massage and baby yoga are great ways of helping a child enjoy 'tummy time' with their parents.

A report published by FSID on the 11th May finds that one in five babies are at increased risk of cot death because they are not sleeping on their backs. (www.sids.org.uk). The report explains that some parents are not allowing their babies to sleep on their back for fear of them suffering from plagiocephaly, more commonly known as 'flat head syndrome'. This condition is cosmetic and usually corrects itself when the child is around one year of age.

However, this condition can be avoided if babies are allowed supervised time on their tummies each day. The report explains that most parents recognise the need to allow their babies to play on their backs, but only 5% allowed them time to play on their fronts.

For more information please visit www.sids.org.uk/fsid/