

## Okeechobee News

### **Five important tips to keep babies safe September is Baby Safety Awareness Month**

*published September 2, 2021*

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FORT MYERS — Caution and uncertainty are natural emotions for any new parent. But for some – including first-time, young and low-income parents struggling to find their footing – raising a happy, healthy baby can be overwhelming. September is national Baby Safety Awareness Month, a great opportunity to educate all parents on how to keep their infants safe from harm.

With every new stage of child development comes new risks. Children's Home Society of Florida encourages parents to prepare ahead of time to keep baby safe. Here are five important reminders:

- 1.) Tipovers are a leading cause of injury to children. Secure to the wall televisions and furniture that can easily topple over, like bookcases and dressers.
- 2.) Soft bedding including blankets, pillows and bumper pads pose strangulation hazards to infants and are linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Follow the ABCs of Sleep Safe to reduce the risk of sleep-related deaths:
  - A stands for Alone. Baby should sleep alone in a separate space for every sleep, including naps.
  - B stands for Back. Baby should sleep on their back, not their stomach or sides.
  - C stands for Crib. Baby should sleep in a crib (or safety-approved Pack-and-Play) with a firm mattress and fitted sheet.

3.) Keep choking hazards out of reach, such as loose change, small refrigerator magnets and button batteries like those found in TV remotes or flameless candles, which can pose serious risk if ingested.

4.) In Florida, it can be particularly important to protect baby from sun and heat. Apply sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 and limit the time baby spends outside on hot days to 30 minutes or less.

5.) Thousands of children each year are poisoned or suffer eye injury injured from laundry and dishwasher detergent packets easily mistaken as candy. Keep these packets out of reach of children or opt for more traditional detergent products.

“For new parents, adjusting to life with their baby can be just as challenging as it is joyous. It’s not uncommon to feel isolated and overwhelmed by all of the do’s and don’ts,” says Charles Scherer, Children’s Home Society of Florida regional executive director. “But parents need to know they are not alone and help is available. Children’s Home Society of Florida has qualified parenting and child development specialists ready to partner with moms and dads as they raise their children in safe, healthy, nurturing homes. Through our proven Healthy Families programs, parents find the strength and community they’re looking for.”

Year-round, Children's Home Society of Florida empowers parents to create safer homes with its Healthy Families Program throughout Lee and Collier counties. With the support of CHS' qualified professionals, parents address topics from postpartum care and inconsolable crying to kindergarten readiness, age-appropriate discipline and more. Families receive support directly from the comfort of their own home and on their schedule. Anyone interested in learning more can call (239) 334-0222.

## About Children's Home Society of Florida

On the front lines since 1902, Children's Home Society of Florida is the oldest and largest statewide organization devoted to helping children and families. Children's Home Society of Florida serves more than 50,000 children and family members throughout the state each year. More: [www.chsfl.org](http://www.chsfl.org)



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