



# Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: April 2, 2021

TO: Representative Karin Power, Chair;  
Representatives Lisa Reynolds and Jack Zika, Vice Chairs;  
and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood

FROM: Angela Zallen, MD, FAAP  
Vice President of the Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: Support for HB 3379 – Removing Crib Bumpers from the Marketplace

My name is Dr. Angela Zallen, and I am writing today to urge this committee to support HB3379, which would remove padded crib bumpers from the marketplace. I am a pediatric hospitalist in Springfield, Oregon, the co-chair of Safe Kids West Oregon, and the board Vice President of the Oregon Pediatric Society. I am also a mother of two small children and am passionate about keeping kids and babies safe and healthy.

There is nothing more tragic than a baby dying unexpectedly. There are approximately 3,500 babies every year in the United States that die in their sleep before their first birthday.<sup>1</sup> Some have medical explanations. Many infants, however, die without explanation or because they were in an unsafe sleep environment. This phenomenon is called Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) and encompasses both Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation in Bed (ASSB). Even in cases where a cause could not be identified, very few infants who died were in a completely safe sleep environment. Most babies that died were in sleep environments that put them at risk.

In the mid-1990's, there was a very successful campaign to encourage families to keep babies on their backs to sleep. This campaign contributed to the reduction of SUID deaths by 53%.<sup>2</sup> Since then, we have failed to make any more progress in decreasing the incidence of these deaths. What can we do to make babies safer?

Following safe sleep recommendations can prevent sleep-related infant deaths. These recommendations include placing babies on their backs to sleep in their own sleep space without soft bedding, bumpers, toys, or pillows. However, there are many products on the market that do not adhere to safe sleep recommendations, and their mere presence in the marketplace seems to falsely reassure parents that they are safe for their babies.



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As a community, it is time to stand up to businesses that sell unsafe products marketed to exhausted parents that put babies at risk. We cannot wait until babies die to take products off the market that do not follow safe sleep guidelines. Unfortunately, in the case of crib bumpers, babies already have. Crib bumpers pose an enormous risk to babies of asphyxiation and strangulation in bed. The risks of crib bumpers have been well known in pediatric medicine for years, and we as a specialty have actively recommended against them. However, there is only so much that education and expert recommendation can do when these products are still on the market and widely available. Please do your part in removing these harmful products from the market to protect babies. We can do a lot to make a crib a safe place to be in Oregon, and we should. Our babies' lives depend on it.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0109-sleep-related-deaths.html>

2. *SIDS and Other Sleep-Related INFANT Deaths: Updated 2016 recommendations for a SAFE Infant sleeping environment. (2016). Pediatrics, 138(5). doi:10.1542/peds.2016-2938*