



In 2015, there were 3,700 sudden unexpected infant deaths in the United States.

In an effort to find out what contributes to sudden infant death in Arkansas, the committee for Aging, Children and Youth, and Legislative Affairs is given an annual report from the Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review Program. This report was presented earlier this month.

The Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review program was established in 2010. It consists of 10 local review teams that review unexpected deaths of Arkansas children ages birth to 17 years old. Teams meet and review cases quarterly to identify circumstances of unexpected deaths and make

recommendations for prevention based on their findings.

Under Act 1818 of 2005, cases that are reviewable meet the following criteria:

- a) Child was not under the care of a physician for treatment of an illness that is the cause of death.
- b) Death was due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- c) Death was due to an unknown cause.
- d) Death is not under criminal investigation or being prosecuted.

From 2010-2015, 283 cases have been reviewed. Of those cases, 20% involved motor vehicle accidents. And 10% of the cases reviewed were suicides.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID) are the leading cause of death in reviewed cases.

These deaths are frequently related to unsafe sleep practices, such as co-sleeping with parents, the placing of a child to sleep in an unsafe position or placing the child to sleep in an adult bed. Soft objects in the crib, such as pillows, blankets, bumper pads and stuffed animals are also indicated as contributing factors in many of these sleep related deaths as these types of objects can obstruct a child's airway, which may cause asphyxia.

Through the review process, 123 (94%) of the infant cases reviewed as SIDS/SUID or asphyxia were determined to be sleep-related.

Often, more than one unsafe sleep practice was identified during the review process.

Among sleep-related deaths, co-sleeping was listed in 64 (52%) cases

In 55 (46%) of the cases, the infants were not placed on their backs to sleep. And 79 (64%) of the cases, the child died while not in an approved crib, bassinette or play yard.

The American Academy of Pediatrics' Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome updated its recommendations on SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths in 2016. Highlights of the recommendations include (but are not limited to):

- Babies should be put to sleep on their back, not stomach or sides.
- Use a firm sleep surface with no soft objects or loose bedding
- Breastfeeding is recommended
- Room sharing (without bed sharing) for up to 1 year

- Offer a pacifier at nap and bedtime
- Avoid smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs during pregnancy and after birth

We will continue to review the most recent findings and recommendations to determine what new policies may be needed to reduce the number of child death cases in our state. In the meantime, if you would like more information and resources concerning SIDS, visit www.cdc.gov/sids.