

Newborn Nests

Each week, at least one Wisconsin infant dies in an unsafe sleep environment. In order to address this preventable tragedy, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin has created a pilot project to distribute Newborn Nests (otherwise known as baby boxes). Families engaged in home visiting services through Children's Hospital of Wisconsin will be offered a Newborn Nest if they are pregnant and/or have an infant younger than 30 days old. The pilot will be evaluated to measure change in behavior, attitudes of staff and families served and utilization of the Newborn Nest.

Why a Newborn Nest

Alternatives to the traditional crib have been around for a very long time, such as a drawer or wash basket, and were used to meet the needs of families. These alternatives allow for sleeping near their baby while keeping him/her safe. Today, a common crib alternative is the Pack N Play; however space often remains an issue.

Although there is not any research in the United States on Newborn Nests, research from other countries is promising. In 1937 Finland had an extremely high infant mortality rate of 65 deaths for every 1,000 births. The government passed the Maternity Grants Act to help decrease the high rate. Originally for families in poverty, the grant provided every newborn infant with the basics so that he or she would have the same start and chance at life as other infants in higher economic classes. The program now gives every baby a box, no matter what economic class. The kit includes a box for the baby to sleep in along with other necessities such as clothes, diapers, etc. Once Finland's babies started sleeping in boxes, their infant mortality rates dropped to 3.38 deaths for every 1,000 births.



Highlights of a Newborn Nest

- Used for baby's first few months of life, allowing baby to establish sleep behavior by sharing a room but not a bed.
- Lightweight and compact, making it easy to move around the house.
- Portable and can be taken to other places, such as grandma's house or childcare provider, to ensure baby always has a safe place to sleep.