



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE OF SAFE SLEEP AND BREASTFEEDING: CBOS AND FAMILIES AS MESSENGERS AND SUPPORTERS

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BACKGROUND

Since 2020, the rate of SUID has been rising, reaching approximately **3,700 deaths in 2022** (CDC, 2024). **Black infants are nearly three times more likely to be affected than white infants** (CDC, 2024). Many of these deaths are preventable through safe sleep practices, proper infant product use, and breastfeeding. However, barriers like **misinformation and limited access to culturally relevant resources persist**.

The Let's Talk Community Chats Program

Let's Talk Community Chats provide **safe, culturally responsive spaces** where families can engage in open conversations about safe sleep, breastfeeding, and infant care. These casual, drop-in events are led by **trusted community members**, including doulas, lactation consultants, grandparents, and dads.

By addressing **systemic barriers and cultural challenges**, the program offers solutions that respect families' lived experiences. Facilitators receive training from First Candle on **AAP safe sleep guidelines** and breastfeeding support, ensuring that families receive **accurate, nonjudgmental, and actionable information**.

Key Program Features

- **Monthly events** in familiar community spaces like retail stores, laundromats, and community centers.
- **One-on-one, in-depth conversations** tailored to parents, grandparents, and caregivers.
- **Free resources**, including swaddles, diapers, infant feeding support pillows (Boppy's), and local social service information.

SUCCESS: KEY FINDINGS FROM LET'S TALK PILOT (ATLANTA, APRIL-AUGUST 2024)

- **Demographics:**
 - 93% Black/African-American
 - 80% aged 26-45
- **Impact on Safe Sleep Practices:**
 - "I now place baby on their back for every sleep" increased from 40% to 60% from 1 week to 1 month after the event.
 - "I now keep soft objects away from the infant's sleep area" increased from 40% to 70% from 1 week to 1 month after the event.
- **Participant Feedback:**
 - 96% found the information on safe sleep and breastfeeding **helpful** or **very helpful**.
 - 98% felt **comfortable** engaging with facilitators.
 - 96% found the event **easy to access**.
 - 97% found the event **hours convenient**.

"It's always best to get information from people who look like you and relate to you."

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ISPID Houston 2025



"The event coordinators were very kind, accommodating, and especially knowledgeable in safe sleep practices and newborn/infant care! All of my concerns were addressed perfectly."

NEXT STEPS: EXPANDING THE REACH OF LET'S TALK

- **Expanding to High-Impact Areas:**
 - We plan to expand **Let's Talk** to communities most impacted by SUID, prioritizing areas with higher rates of infant mortality and health disparities.
- **Offering Straight Talk to Train Providers:**
 - Aiming to train healthcare providers and community advocates through **Straight Talk**, enhancing their capacity to deliver culturally responsive education on safe sleep and breastfeeding.
- **Expanding to NICUs:**
 - Currently piloting **Let's Talk** in a **NICU setting**, with promising initial findings that show strong engagement and positive feedback:
- **Participant Demographics:**
 - Majority of respondents were **Black (89%)**
 - Age group **26-35 (44%)**
- **Positive Participant Feedback:**
 - 100% felt comfortable, supported, and that facilitators respected their cultural values.
 - 100% had their specific questions or concerns fully addressed.
 - 100% reported increased confidence in applying safe sleep practices.
 - 100% found the breastfeeding information helpful or very helpful.
 - 100% felt the products and recommendations were relevant to their needs.

