

Infant Safe Sleep Environmental Scan Results



Saving babies. Supporting families.



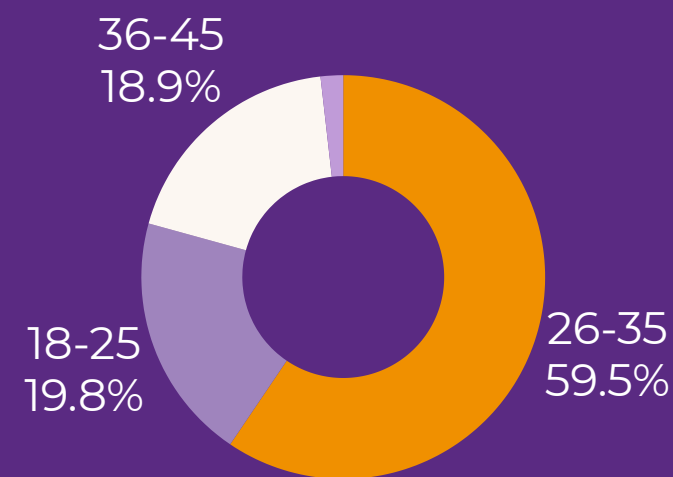
**HEALTHY MOTHERS,
HEALTHY BABIES**

Coalition of Georgia

Demographics

Black Birth Giver Survey

- N=111
- 87% of respondents were Black/African-American
- 49% of respondents were currently pregnant
- Most (59%) were between the ages of 26-35



Black Birth Giver Focus Group

- N=12
- All participants were Black/African-American
- Half of participants were between the ages of 26-35 and half were between the ages of 36-45
- 75% of participants were currently pregnant



Doula Focus Group

- N=7
- All serve Black families in the Atlanta Perinatal Region.

Dad Focus Group

- N=18

Provider Interviews

- N=6
- Professions included lactation consultants, nurses, pediatricians, community health workers, and family practitioners.



BLACK BIRTH GIVER SURVEY KEY TAKEAWAYS



Barriers to Safe Sleep Recommendations

1. Fear
2. Being tired
3. Convenience
4. Fussy or sick baby
5. Lack of space
6. No support / single mom



Defining Safe Sleep for Black Birth Givers: Key Elements

1. Emphasis on placing the baby on their back during sleep.
2. Avoidance of soft objects, blankets, or toys in the sleeping area to prevent suffocation.
3. Emphasis on baby sleeping alone.
4. Awareness that safe sleep practices vary across cultures.
5. Emphasis on an educational approach to reduce risks.

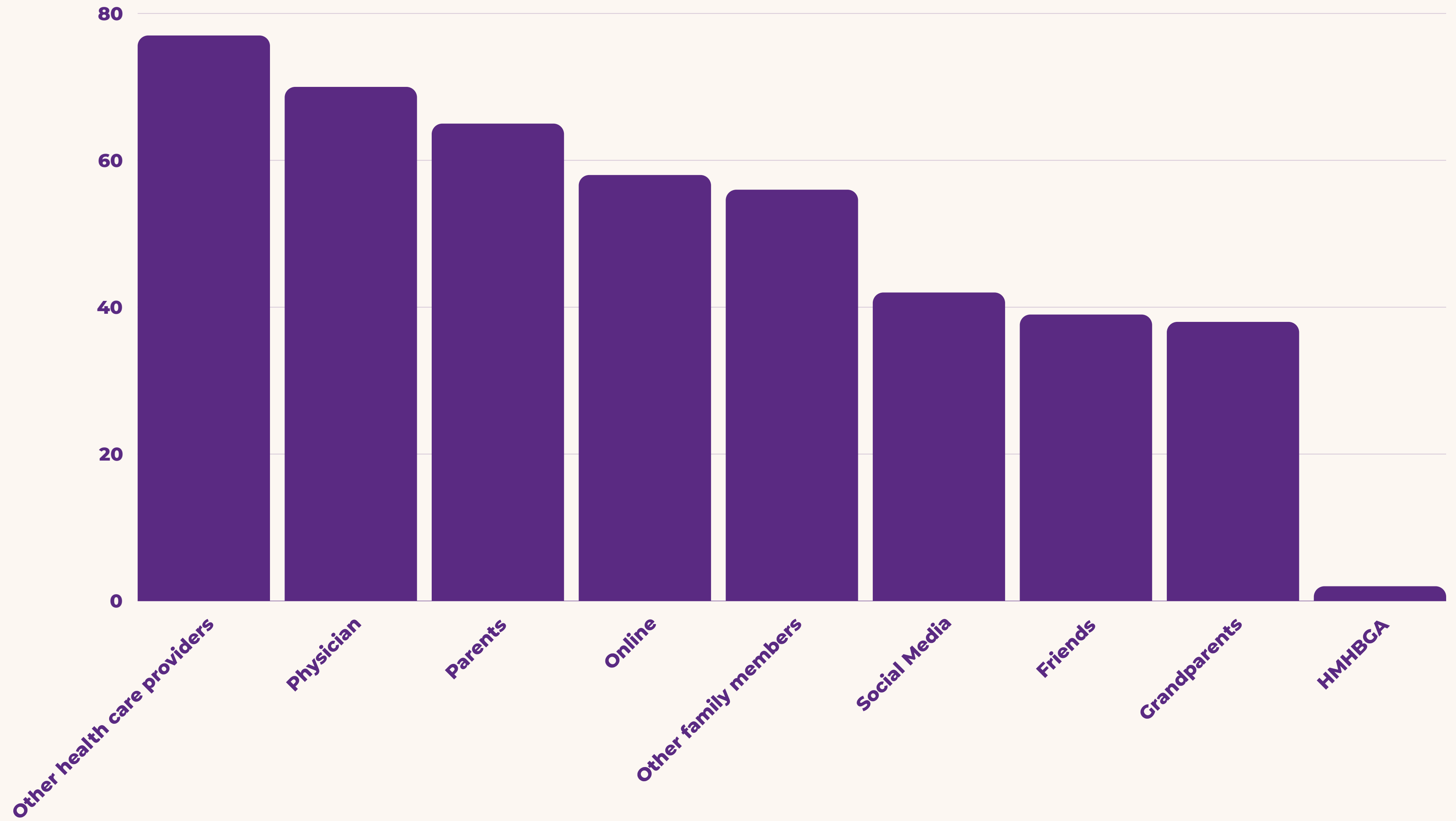


Desirable Features for Events from Black Birth Givers:

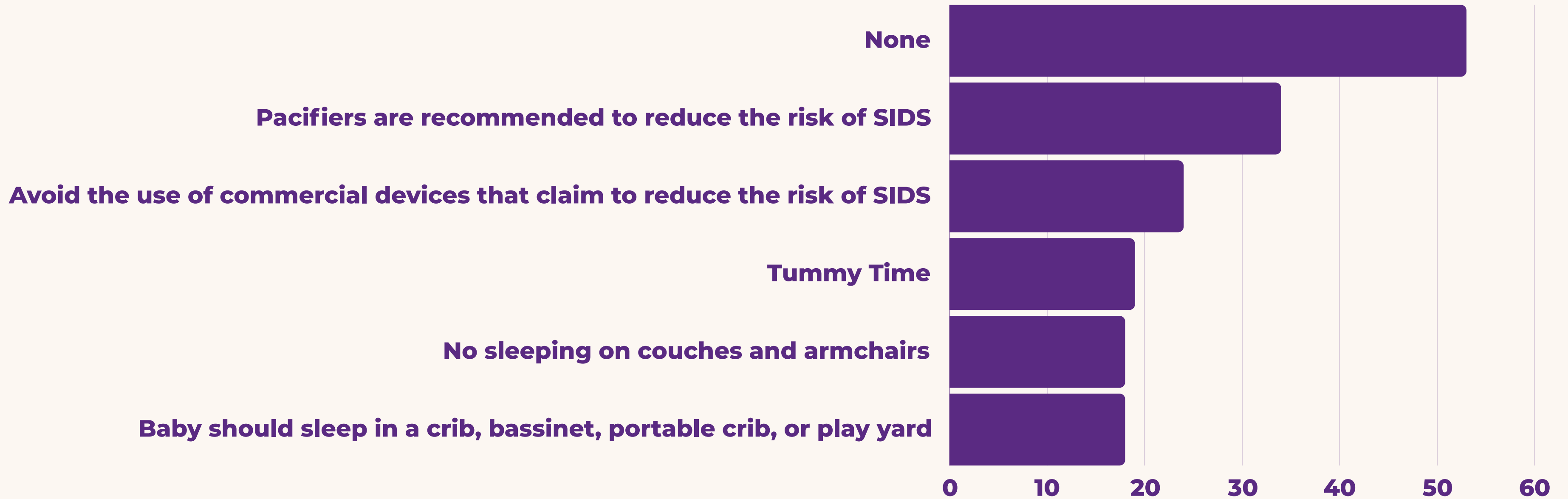
- Free resources and giveaways including bassinets, swaddles, and informational handbooks.
- Emphasis on information and education on safe sleep, developmental steps, and recommended practices.
- Interest in learning from professionals, attending demonstrations, and receiving educational handouts.
- Engaging activities for children.
- Community engagement
- Interest in learning from others' experiences, like hearing from parents who have experienced Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Nutritional supplements and samples



Sources of Information for Black Birth Givers



Most Surprising AAP Recommendations to Black Birth Givers



PROVIDER INTERVIEW THEMES



Provider Themes

NICU safe sleep practices may sometimes contradict AAP recommendations.

“It's a little bit difficult because being in a NICU environment, we don't model Safe Sleep from the very beginning because they're on a monitor and respiratory status, and they have to have other developmental care things in their bed in order to make sure that they grow appropriately.”

Providers often have to meeting families where they are and provide practical solutions when safe sleep guidelines are not being followed.

“That's hard, especially in-- one that comes up frequently is bedsharing with breastfeeding. We talk about the recommendation is that we share a room, not a bed, but if you are going to be insistent on doing that, what are your plans for safety? What are your plans to not have your baby fall off the bed, and not roll over on your baby or have it get caught in the covers? We'll talk about having a portable bassinet.”

Provider Themes

Safe Sleep Product bans may have little impact on low-income families.

“The demographic that we service, I don't think that it would impact much at all because we are in a lower bracket. And so many of our clients don't have access to those items. So when they come into our program, we actually give them a pack and play if they're requesting it that is safe.”

Early Intervention around safe sleep may be helpful.

“Again, I believe that it has to start early on in the pregnancy. Because if it's something that you're mentioning early on, you can still drive it home you have nine months if you catch them at the beginning, you have nine months to drive this point home.”

Recommendations for Safe Sleep Events

Cultural Sensitivity and Representation

“And so I think that the approach that we take when teaching these classes need to be more people friendly, more culturally diverse, because at the end the presentations as well as the information because if you have a roomful of people of color, but you don't have a baby, who was a baby a brown baby, then that's going to lose people to so I think we need to be sensitive to that.”

Encouraging and non-judgmental messaging

“I think words again words of encouragement and finding a way this, especially for our people. And when I say our people I say people I mean to say people of color. We get so stuck in tradition and how grandma did it and how it did it that it can sometimes be difficult to change them to cause a change in the mindset to say the old way doesn't mean it's the best way and to get people okay with change.”

DOULA FOCUS GROUP THEMES



Doula Themes

Many doulas shared stories of families impacted by SIDS or sleep-related accidents.

- “One of them [doula] had a 15-year-old mom, she had a baby, was very sleep-deprived, she was exclusively breastfeeding, no support. She had mentioned to the case manager a couple of days prior like, “I’m just very tired. I’m exhausted. I need to sleep...No one did anything about her needing to sleep and she rolled...when she woke up baby was found in the bed, he had transitioned.”
- “Being mindful of them sleeping on dad’s chest too, because that’s one of my friends that’s how the baby had passed away and it was just like he was-- both parents were sleep-deprived.”
- “The car seat one, that’s how my other friend whose baby passed granted they were off of preemie, so the baby’s lungs were already not strong. Family was homeless at the time; they didn’t have anywhere for the babies to sleep. They were staying in a hotel room.”

Doula Themes

Many doulas highlighted how breastfeeding can make it difficult to adhere to safe sleep guidelines.

“A lot of times when I go into these houses and I just talk with these moms and they're drained and they're just looking at me like, “How in the world am I supposed to do this? Because the pediatrician is telling me...He's supposed to sleep on his back in a whole other bed and I can't do anything like this.” I feel it's counterproductive to breastfeeding.”

Doulas discussed the need for more in-depth conversations about safe sleep, specifically in the hospital setting.

“In the hospital they have you put the baby in the-- You put the baby in the bassinet. They can't sleep in the bed with you but there's not an explanation as to why.”

Doulas shared desired support for sharing safe sleep information including informational handouts and referrals.

- “Would it be also helpful to have somewhere to refer them like a person who is a safe sleep instructor? Yes.”
- “When I go do home visits, I always leave them with some tangible information because I know that people learn differently. If I can give you this information on say, co-sleeping or breastfeeding and making that successful and along with all the other handouts that I'm going to give you. That will probably be a better way. I know when I go and I miss more than one time, a lot of times I go and they have the stuff that I gave them on their refrigerator.”

Doula Themes

Doulas are attentive to the prevalence of co-sleeping, and recognize the importance of understanding potential obstacles and meeting families where they are.

“When I constantly hear a lot of Black families specifically, this is them talking about co-sleeping, it's like the best thing they could ever do for themselves.”

Doulas expressed the need for safe sleep messaging that does not create fear.

“Because I have moms who want to co-sleep because it is more convenient but they're terrified. They're like, “No, no, no.” They said that, “Have a friend whose baby died from co-sleep.” They're very afraid. Can we find ways to not make them scared?”

BIRTH GIVER FOCUS GROUP THEMES



Birth Giver Themes

The majority of birth givers were unfamiliar with the Safe Sleep for Babies Act, and do not believe it will have an impact on them.

“Well, I actually have not heard of this act before. I don't think it'll impact me in any way because I don't use any of these things. Looking at these pictures, they look unsafe anyway. I haven't heard of it, and I'll never actually be affected by it.”

Birth givers shared receiving conflicting messaging about safe sleep.

“Because of the popularity that's promoted behind a lot of these products, especially the brand names. Because that law or that policy was passed, why haven't these items been taken off the market? Why are they still able to be sold to families or promoted to families? Given away at-- I've even seen them at state-approved baby showers. Like with WIC and Medicaid or what's the other program? Like insurance, like Amerigroup and these different programs. They're giving these items away to mothers or families. If they're not aware of this information or especially of this policy, why is this stuff still being given away or shared or what have you?”

Birth Giver Themes

Birth givers mentioned many barriers to guidance adherence including breastfeeding, having a designated safe sleep space in multiple locations, tiredness, and lack of support.

- “I sometimes might get him out of his bed and breastfeed and just doze off with him and just totally forget about it...Have to keep reminding myself after I get done feeding him to put it back in his bed, but sometimes some nights it just doesn't go like that, unfortunately.
- “In the past I've always wanted to be closely more so for the convenience, especially in the middle of the night. It's easier to just turn around, grab baby, breastfeed.”
- “If I maybe went to visit my mom, we didn't have a sleeping space for her there, I might put a blanket on the couch, spread it out real tight and just put her in a position where I knew she couldn't roll or anything. Which I knew okay, we're taking a chance here.”
- “My challenge is this, sometimes I'm tired, sometimes I have night duty on my own. Sometimes it's more convenient just to lay her next to me.”

Birth Giver Themes

Birth givers provided valuable recommendations for program content.

- “I don't think I would come to something that only talked about safe sleeping. There would have to be more of a holistic approach where we're addressing other things or addressing just how we're feeling as women and as mothers and things of that nature.”
- “At an in-person event, I would love to see either they could use if somebody has a baby or a lifesized doll, everybody could practice maybe swaddling the baby, putting the baby down, just getting some hands-on experience and possibly showing everybody the correct items to use.”



**DADS AND
SUPPORT
PERSONS FOCUS
GROUP THEMES**



Dads and Support Persons Themes

Dads and support persons shared suggestions on who should be informed about safe sleep, including grandparents and day care staff.

“Our mothers and daddies and grandparents, they need to be retaught some of this stuff. That a lot of stuff could good, but a lot of stuff that they learned or that they were passed down was really out of survival. How much of that was detrimental? You know what I mean? A lot got to be corrected.”

Dads and support persons expressed willingness to attend community events and connect with other fathers.

- “I like my interaction be in person, and I would stop because I already do talk to some of the fathers because my observation of this generation is more young men that grew up without their fathers. It's like they want to do or give their children what they didn't have.”
- “I actually got a barbershop, so I would like to put this in my information in my shop because I have a whole lot of dads, younger dads, and little brothers come in to my shop.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Environmental Scan Key Takeaways

1. Meeting families where they are and taking practical steps towards change.

2. Integrating early intervention into family planning and prenatal care.

3. Community events must be interactive and engaging.

4. When creating messaging, it's important to ensure that the guidelines are well-explained and that the tone is not fear-based or accusatory.

5. When planning community events, incorporate safe sleep messaging alongside other important information such as breastfeeding promotion for a holistic approach.



Thank
you!

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