

Contact: Samantha Gray  
Telephone: 423.878.8359  
Email: samantha@attachmentparenting.org

For Immediate Release

## **Research: Infants Sleeping in Isolation Twice as Likely to Die of SIDS**

*Attachment Parenting International releases new research-based infant sleep guidelines to help parents make educated decisions*

Nashville, TN – February 9, 2009 – Safe sleep practices? In a world where parents are told not to sleep with their babies for fear of SIDS, and then told that babies who sleep alone are at greater risk of SIDS, what's a parent to do? Attachment Parenting International, a non-profit global research and parenting support group with more than 60 chapters in North America, today released its safe sleep guidelines to help parents sort through the seemingly contradictory research and recommendations for infant sleeping arrangements.

API's safe sleep guidelines will be distributed globally in a new safe sleep brochure, also available online through API's Web site (<http://www.attachmentparenting.org/safeinfantsleep/>).

“With parents receiving so much confusing and conflicting information on this subject, it's great to have a global parenting resource like API addressing the issue,” said Dr. William Sears, noted pediatrician and parenting author. “API's new safe sleep literature can help parents look at the statistics and determine the safest solution for their family,” said Dr. James McKenna, noted sleep authority and director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory at Notre Dame.

API strives to ensure parents have access to the most complete information about how to create safe infant sleep environments, with one of its eight Principles of Parenting exclusively focused on ensuring safe sleep. APIRG, API's research group, has reviewed the most recent research on this and other child development issues in order to help parents determine best practices.

Based on the most current research studies, API has also issued a position paper summarizing information about infant sleep safety and appropriate, healthy and normal family sleep practices around the world. Research findings include:

- Safe cosleeping, with infants and toddlers whether in the same room or sharing the same bed, is the custom, not the exception, for more than 80% of cultures in the world – including many with low SIDS rates.
- Infants who sleep in isolation are twice as likely to die of SIDS between the ages of three and six months.
- Safe cosleeping arrangements, such as bed sharing or being within arm's reach of the parent's bed, provide opportunities for more continuous adult monitoring, which can enable parents to detect infant sleep difficulties and intervene quickly.

- Parental cigarette smoking and drug or alcohol use have been associated with higher risks of SIDS events during shared sleeping arrangements.

And as outlined in the API **Safe Infant Sleep** brochure along with other key guidelines:

- If bed sharing, babies are safest when sleeping next to mother, rather than between mother and father, and should be on a firm surface free of loose or heavy bedding or objects.
- For crib sleeping, cribs should meet Consumer Product Safety Commission standards and the mattress should fit snugly in the crib.
- Infants should always be placed to sleep on their back, regardless of where they sleep.

### **Cosleeping Arrangements are the Most Common, Safest?**

According to the API Research Group's review of the research studies, although there are certain aspects of a sleeping environment that may place an infant at greater risk for suffocation or SIDS, cosleeping arrangements, including bed sharing, themselves do not increase this risk. Rather, these cosleeping arrangements may actually reduce infants' risk – if practiced in a safe manner. Research also demonstrated that most cultures sleep with or near their infant throughout the first one or two years of life.

For further details and research findings, please visit API's Web site

(<http://www.attachmentparenting.org/safeinfantsleep/>) to download a safe sleep brochure and see the APIRG position paper.

**Attachment Parenting** is based in the practice of nurturing parenting methods that create strong emotional bonds, also known as secure attachment, between children and their parent(s). This style of parenting encourages responsiveness to children's emotional needs, enabling children to develop trust that their needs will be met. As a result, this strong attachment helps children develop the capacity for secure, empathic, peaceful, and enduring relationships that follow them into adulthood.

**Attachment Parenting International (API)** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit member organization founded in 1994 to network with parents, professionals and like-minded organizations around the world. API's mission is to educate and support all parents in raising secure, joyful and empathic children in order to strengthen families and create a more compassionate world. In addition to providing assistance in forming Attachment Parenting support groups, API functions as a clearinghouse providing educational materials, research information, consultative, referral and speaker services to promote Attachment Parenting concepts.

API board and advisory board members include such noted parenting authors as Dr. William Sears and Martha Sears, R.N., co-sleeping specialist Dr. James McKenna, Lu Hanessian of LetTheBabyDrive.com, author Alice Miller and Jan Hunt of the Natural Child Project, among others. API's Safe Infant Sleep program is supported by API and its network of Leaders and Support Groups, AskDrSears.com, James McKenna, Ph.D., La Leche League International, Amby Baby and Arm's Reach Co-Sleeper.