

# COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION

## Safe Sleep – Recommendation 12

**Recommendation Summary:** Part of changes to provincial child welfare standards, end birth alerts, include assessment of infant sleep environment in safety planning, provide safe sleep surfaces.

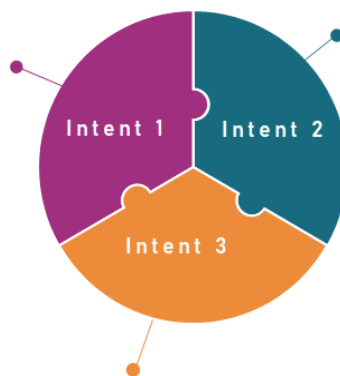
**Primary Public Body:** Manitoba Families

**1. Change provincial child welfare standards to include assessments of the infant sleep environment in every safety plan for expectant mothers/expectant parents.**

Changes to the following standards were made: Standard 1.1.1 Intake under Safety Assessment and Standard 1.2.2 for Voluntary Family Services. Both include the requirement to provide safe sleep information to families and to assist families in accessing a safe sleep surface, if needed.

**3. Provide public education information to expectant mothers/parents on safe sleep practices for infants**

Families reported that changes to the standards will ensure workers are providing public education information to families in need. In addition, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has developed a Safe Sleep Handout in English and French.



**2. Following assessments by child welfare professionals, expectant mothers/care givers without a safe sleep surface available be provided with a safe sleep surface if none is available (to Families with CFS involvement). Policy to ensure all mothers and primary caregivers are provided with safe sleep surfaces.**

As noted in the addition to standard 1.2.2 above, workers will be expected to support parents in obtaining a safe sleep environment if it is identified as a need. Families identified that child welfare is not funded to provide this item to all families, and there are other sources available to assist parents in the purchase of a safe sleep surface. Workers will continue supporting families to locate and access appropriate resources.

### COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION



## Recommendation Compliance Summary

In accordance with subsection 11(1) clause (d) of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act (ACYA)*, the Advocate retains the responsibility "to monitor the implementation of recommendations included in reports made under section 27 (investigation) or special reports made under section 31."

This form details the assessment of implementation of compliance made under the referenced subsection of the ACYA. MACY assesses implementation of compliance with recommendations once a year but receives updates from public bodies every six months.

1. Recommendation Information	
<b>Special Report Name:</b>	<b>Safe and Sound: A Special Report on the Unexpected Sleep-Related Deaths of 145 Manitoba Infants</b>
<b>Date Released:</b>	3/13/2020
<b>Full Recommendation:</b> (including details)	<p><b>Recommendation Twelve:</b> The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends that Manitoba Families, as part of the changes to provincial child welfare standards announced to end the use of birth alerts, include an assessment of the infant sleep environment in every safety plan for expectant mothers, and provide mothers and primary caregivers with the safe sleep surfaces and public education information they need to ensure the safety of their child.</p> <p><b>DETAILS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child services professionals will assess the safety of infant sleep environments.</li> <li>• Families receiving child welfare services and requiring resources and/or information on safe sleep practices will be identified.</li> <li>• Families will be resourced with a crib or other safe sleep surface, if none is available.</li> </ul>
<b>Intent(s) of Recommendation:</b>	<p>The intents of the recommendation are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Change provincial child welfare standards to include assessments of the infant sleep environment in every safety plan for expectant mothers/expectant parents.</b></li> <li><b>2. Following assessments by child welfare professionals, provide expectant mothers/parents without a safe sleep surface with a crib or other safe sleep surface, and develop a policy to ensure all mothers and primary care givers are provided with safe sleep surfaces.</b></li> <li><b>3. Provide public education information to expectant mothers/parents on safe sleep practices for infants.</b></li> </ol>
<b>Issue:</b>	Safe Sleep
<b>Primary Department:</b>	Manitoba Families
<b>Dates of Previous Official Updates from Public Body:</b>	June 30, 2022 May 31, 2021
2. Compliance Determination	
<b>Fully Compliant 1.0</b>	Actions taken fully implement the recommendation.
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	Largely Compliant
<b>Previous Compliance Determination</b>	Limitedly Compliant

### 3. Rationale for Determination

*(How did you reach this compliance determination)*

**Intent 1: Change provincial child welfare standards to include assessments of the infant sleep environment in every safety plan for expectant mothers/expectant parents.**

**2022**

- Manitoba Families reported that:
  - The following statement has been added to Standard 1.1.1 Intake under Safety Assessment: “The safety assessment completed with families must include an assessment of the infant sleep environment for expectant parents or parents with infants under age 1. This assessment must include discussion of safe sleep options and hazards in the sleep environment. Parents will be provided with written public education information. If identified as a need, the worker will support the parent in obtaining a safe sleep environment.”
  - In addition, SDM Safety Assessment Policy & Procedures manual prompts for assessment of infant sleeping arrangements when assessing the living environment.
  - Families is also utilizing the WRHA safe sleep handout (<https://healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca/safe-sleep-and-your-baby/>).
  - In order to expand the application of the safe sleep assessment beyond the wording of our recommendation, Manitoba Families made additions to Standard 1.2.2 for Voluntary Family Services: “The agency worker will inform the expectant parent of safe sleep options and sleep environments that present a risk to infants. The worker will provide the expectant parent with written information about safe sleep, assess the proposed sleep environment and discuss options for increasing safety if appropriate. If identified as a need, the worker will support the expectant parent in obtaining a safe sleep environment.”
- These changes will accompany the release of condensed Standards, which will reportedly occur in November 2022.

**2021**

- Manitoba Families reported that the new standard for practice with high risk expectant parents (1.2.2) currently includes requirements for assessments, planning, and connecting expectant parents with resources. To this end, work is underway with CFS Authorities to monitor implementation of the new standard and model.
- Manitoba Families is working to consider the best way to address this particular intent of the recommendation within the context of the new model. They foresee further progress during the next reporting period. Despite the new standard (1.2.2) for high risk expectant parents, there remains uncertainty as the standard does not explicitly state that child welfare workers are supposed to assess an infant’s sleep environment. Pending the submission of further information in 2022, the activities reported thus far indicate that initial steps are being taken to meet the intent of this recommendation.
- Additional information and actions provided indicate that the Standing Committee with the Authorities has discussed this recommendation and developed a work plan on March 24, 2021. Work plan items include:
  - A new Foundational Standard will be introduced which focuses on the requirement to assess for a safe sleep environment at Intake and Assessment. This will include consideration of differing cultural practices and other factors as per the various Authorities. The safe sleep assessment will include the provision of education to the care provider. Assessment tools, templates, and resources are to be shared at the

discretion of the Authorities and agencies.

- While there is no evidence to suggest that the above-mentioned work plan item has been implemented, the development of a work plan is a promising step towards implementation of this intent.

**Intent 2: Following assessments by child welfare professionals, provide expectant mothers/parents without a safe sleep surface with a crib or other safe sleep surface, and develop a policy to ensure all mothers and primary care givers are provided with safe sleep surfaces.**

**2022**

- As noted in the addition to Standard 1.2.2 above, workers will be expected to support parents in obtaining a safe sleep environment if it is identified as a need.
- Manitoba Families identified that child welfare is not funded to provide safe sleep surfaces to all families, and there are other sources available to assist parents in the purchase of a safe sleep surface. Workers will continue supporting families to locate and access appropriate resources.

**2021**

- Manitoba Families noted that in 2014 it encouraged all four Authorities to ensure their agencies were providing safe sleep materials to parents. Authorities were provided details on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) funding available at that time for families as well as funding available for car seats and beds for children in care; the latter funding was available before child maintenance was replaced by Single Envelope Funding (SEF).
- The Department of Families provided current safe sleep policies of the General Child and Family Services Authority, Southern First Nations Network of Care, as well as the Metis Child and Family Authority, which outline discussions with expectant and new parents about safe sleep are required.
- Additional information provided by Manitoba Families indicates that EIA and other community funding accessible to case workers remains available. Manitoba Families contends that child maintenance funding remains in place even if it is provided in a different format (SEF) and the total funding provided through SEF is at an equivalent level to prior funding. The Department of Families noted that there are fewer children in care and that resources such as B & L are being replaced with less expensive placements. This means there is more flexibility for agencies to use the funding for similar purchases (e.g., car seats and beds) for children remaining in family care. This recommendation, however, is not applicable solely to children in care who are not in the home; it encompasses families receiving Child and Family Services such as those with Family Enhancement files. A comparison between the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 Department of Families Annual Reports shows that there was a reduction in the number of children in care reported by Manitoba Families for 2018-19 (10,258) in comparison to 2019-2020 (9,849). The total number of children in care reported by Manitoba Families in 2020-21 (9,850) increased by one in comparison to 2019-20 (9,849).

**Intent 3: Provide public education information to expectant mothers/parents on safe sleep practices for infants.**

**2022**

- Manitoba Families identifies that the changes to the Standards will ensure workers are providing public education information to families in need. "The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has developed a "Safe Sleep Handout" in English and French. CYSD distributed it to the Authorities, Designated Intake Agencies and it is available to all agency workers on the

Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS). The handout includes a section on “safer bed-sharing”. It also invites families to contact a Public Health Nurse for assistance in getting an appropriate safe sleeping surface for an infant.”

## 2021

- Implementation of this intent remains under discussion by Manitoba Families.
- The Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse (PACCA) was a multidisciplinary committee that completed tasks such as developing guides for professionals in other fields on reporting abuse. In 2012, PACCA developed material on safe infant sleep, including a pamphlet on the ABCs of Safe Sleep for Baby ([abc\\_of\\_safe\\_sleep.pdf\(gov.mb.ca\)](http://abc_of_safe_sleep.pdf(gov.mb.ca))). The Department of Families has not demonstrated that these materials are being actively shared with expectant mothers/parents despite their availability. Upon follow up, the Department of Families reported the development of updated materials by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA), and ideas on distribution of a pamphlet on safe sleep for infants. This is a promising development in its early stages, which may be further elaborated on as the Standing Committee’s work plan is being implemented.
- Standing Committee has discussed this recommendation and developed a work plan on March 24, 2021. Work plan items include:
  - A new Foundational Standard will be introduced which focuses on the requirement to assess for a safe sleep environment at Intake and Assessment. This will include consideration of differing cultural practices and other factors as per the various Authorities. The safe sleep assessment will include the provision of education to the care provider. Assessment tools, templates, and resources are to be shared at the discretion of the Authorities and agencies.
  - A reference value in the Service Planning Window will be added to the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS). This means that an “assessment type drop down box will be [sic] now include ‘Safe Sleep Education/Assessment’ and will allow agencies to document completion and uploading their agency/Authority specific assessment information.”

**Analysis Summary:** The information provided by Manitoba Families identifies that changes to the Standards have been made and are being rolled out in November 2022. Two Standards have been edited to discuss assessment of an infants’ sleep environment, the requirement of workers to discuss safe sleep surfaces, and the requirement to support families in locating safe sleep surfaces when needed. Manitoba Families is utilizing a WRHA-approved Safe Sleep Pamphlet, and has distributed it to CFS Authorities, DIA’s, and made it available on CFSIS. As the finalization of the update of these standards was confirmed for November 2022, this recommendation is considered fully compliant.