



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	24DC049 Upstate and New York City
Date:	August 8, 2024
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Temporary Assistance (TA) Directors, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Directors, Employment Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators, Fair Hearing Staff
From:	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Interim Guidance on Utilizing Allowances for Infant Safe Sleep Essentials
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	Temporary Assistance Bureau: 518-474-9344 or tabureau@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	N/A

Section 2

Purpose

The purpose of this GIS message is to provide interim guidance advising local Social Services Districts (districts) that families with infants may be eligible to receive a Temporary Assistance (TA) allowance to assist them in obtaining essential items needed for safe sleep under Office Regulation 18 NYCRR 352.7 (a). An Informational Letter (INF) with additional information will be released soon.

More than 120 infants die each year in New York State from sleep-related causes even though infant death due to unsafe sleep practices is preventable. Unsafe sleep practices include infants sleeping in places other than cribs, bassinets, or pack & plays, such as adult beds, baby slings, car seats, couches, or armchairs. Infants sleeping with other children or adults, or with blankets or other loose bedding, is also considered unsafe. Many families may not have the resources necessary to obtain items that would ensure infants are sleeping alone, such as a crib or pack & play.

Program Implications

If all other requirements are met, districts may provide eligible families with an allowance to assist them in obtaining essentials needed for safe sleep, including a crib or pack & play, fitted sheets for a crib or pack & play, and a wearable sleep sack/blanket. This is allowable under Office Regulation 18 NYCRR 352.7(a)(2). Districts may issue a “Bedroom with a single bed” allowance to meet this need.

For individuals residing in temporary housing, 18 NYCRR § 900.18 requires operators of shelters for families with children to furnish each infant resident under the age of two with a suitable crib compliant with federal and State safety standards. Similarly, 18 NYCRR § 352.3 requires that a suitable crib is provided for each infant under the age of two in a commercial hotel/motel serving recipients of temporary housing assistance. If the hotel/motel operator does not have a crib available, the district must supply a crib for eligible families. The costs associated with cribs and safe sleep compliance may be included within the shelter budgets or hotel/motel rates submitted to OTDA.

The New York State Department of Health Safe Sleep Brochure is being revised to inform families with infants that they may be able to receive assistance with obtaining some essential items if they do not have a safe space for their infant to sleep. OTDA will release a more comprehensive INF along with the revised Safe Sleep Brochure when it is available; however, districts may utilize the allowance for infant safe sleep essentials effective immediately.

Additional information regarding safe sleeping practices can be found on the DOH website located here: [Safe Sleep For Baby \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/safe-sleep-for-baby).