Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a new parent's worst nightmare - the sudden death of an infant less than one year of age, most frequently during the night - that has no immediately obvious cause. Although the cause may never be realized, the most likely causes of SIDS are suffocation, asphyxia, entrapment, infection, ingestions, metabolic disease, congenital heart conditions and trauma (either intentional or unintentional.)

There are only a few measures that can be taken to minimize the risk of SIDS. And, New York City is making it a priority to educate new parents and caregivers about them.

A new SIDS public health campaign has hit the streets and we applaud NYC for it.

The rate of SIDS deaths started to fall in the early 1990s with the implementation of the "Back to Sleep" campaign (now known as the "safe to sleep" campaign.) The "face up to wake up" slogan is perhaps the most notorious recommendation, referring to how babies should be put down to sleep - on their backs. Also, a firm sleep surface with no bumpers, pillows, blankets or stuffed animals is another key to SIDS prevention that has been known for some time.

However, not everyone is aware of the importance a safe sleep environment. Without strong prenatal or pediatric medical care, these messages may be missed.

To help, postings such as the one below are popping up all over NYC.
PUT THEM TO BED AS IF THEIR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT. BECAUSE IT DOES.

Babies sleep safest on their backs. It makes it easier for them to breathe, and they are less likely to choke if they spit up.

Babies sleep safest alone, on their backs, in a bare crib or bassinet — not in bed with you.

NO PILLOWS  NO BLANKETS  NO TOYS  NOT ON THEIR BELLY  NOT IN BED WITH YOU

To learn more about Safe Sleep visit nyc.gov/safesleep or call 311.
The title states to, "Put them to bed as if their life depends on it. Because it does."

The educational poster goes further to state that "Babies sleep safest on their backs. It makes it easier for them to breathe and they are less likely to choke if they spit up" and that "Babies sleep safest alone, on their backs, in a bare crib or bassinet - not in bed with you."

Then, in both words and in pictures that break down language barriers, the messages are clearly stated to create a safe sleeping environment for your baby: No pillows. No blankets. No toys. Not on their belly. Not in bed with you.

This is especially important in today's world where images of safe sleep are hard to find. Instead of bare cribs, the media chooses to portray babies sleeping on their stomachs, surrounded by blankets and pillows. For more on my frustration with marketers and the media on this issue, please read here [1].

So, thank you to the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for this smart, clear and impactful public health campaign. Because of it, the babies of New York will sleep a little safer tonight.

For more information on safe sleep from the NYC.gov website, please visit:
http://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/safe-sleep.page [2]