

LLLI Responds to AAP Policy Statement on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schaumburg, IL (October 2005) La Leche League International (LLLI) is concerned about the October 10, 2005 policy statement on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Task Force on SIDS. The recommendations about pacifiers and cosleeping in the statement reflect a lack of basic understanding about breastfeeding management.

Pacifiers, which are recommended in this policy statement, are artificial substitutes for what the breast does naturally. Breastfed babies often nurse to sleep for naps and bedtime. The recommended pacifier usage could cause a reduction in milk supply due to reduced stimulation of the breasts and may affect breastfeeding duration.

LLLI recognizes that safe co-sleeping facilitates breastfeeding. One important way co-sleeping can help a mother's milk supply is by encouraging regular and frequent feeding. Well-known research on safe co-sleeping practices by Dr. James McKenna, Director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame was disregarded by the task force.

Also, the obvious omission of input by the AAP's Section on Breastfeeding may account for the fact that breastfeeding management issues were not taken into consideration. Dr. Nancy Wight, President of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, comments that this statement "represents a truly astounding triumph of ethnocentric assumptions over common sense and medical research." Dr. Wight also states, "There are many physician members of the AAP who do not agree with these recommendations."

Although the authors do state that breastfeeding is beneficial and should be promoted, their recommendations about pacifier use and co-sleeping could have a negative impact on a mother's efforts to breastfeed. The statement causes confusion for parents and falls seriously short of being a useful and comprehensive policy.

LLLI, a non-profit organization that helps mothers learn about breastfeeding, has an international Professional Advisory Board. The LLLI Center for Breastfeeding Information is one of the world's largest libraries of information on breastfeeding, human lactation, and related topics. Monthly meetings are offered to pregnant women and nursing mothers and babies to learn about breastfeeding management.

To find local groups call 800 LA LECHE or visit www.lalecheleague.org