



Georgetown University
National Center for Cultural Competence

*Toolkit for Community Health Providers:
Engaging Ethnic Media to Inform Communities
about Safe Infant Sleep*



The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) provides national leadership and contributes to the body of knowledge on cultural and linguistic competency within systems and organizations. Major emphasis is placed on translating evidence into policy and practice for programs and personnel concerned with health and mental health care delivery, administration and advocacy. The NCCC provides training, technical assistance and consultation, and contributes to knowledge through publications and research. It creates tools and resources to support health and mental health care providers and systems, supports leaders to promote and sustain cultural and linguistic competency, and collaborates with an extensive network of private and public entities to advance their implementation of these concepts. The NCCC provides services to local, state, federal and international governmental agencies, family advocacy and support organizations, local hospitals and health centers, quality improvement organizations, national professional associations and foundations. In addition, the NCCC's web-based curricula, publications and products are accessed by tens of thousands of individuals each year.

Visit the NCCC website: <http://nccc.georgetown.edu>.

For Additional Information Contact:

National Center for Cultural Competence
Center for Child and Human Development
Georgetown University
Box 571485
Washington, DC 20057-1485
Voice: (202) 687.5387 or (800) 788.2066
TTY: (202) 687.5503
Fax: (202) 687.8899
Email: cultural@georgetown.edu
Website: <http://nccc.georgetown.edu>

The NCCC is funded and operates under the auspices of Cooperative Agreement #U40-MC-00145 and is supported in part by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act), Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Suggested Citation:

Rodriguez, M., Horton, B., & Bammarito, K. (2012). *Toolkit for Community Health Providers: Engaging Ethnic Media to Inform Communities about Safe Infant Sleep*. National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University for Child and Human Development: Washington, D.C.

Toolkit for Community Health Providers: Engaging Ethnic Media to Inform Communities about Safe Infant Sleep is protected by the copyright policies of Georgetown University. Permission is granted to use the material for non-commercial purposes if the material is not to be altered and proper credit is given to the authors and to the National Center for Cultural Competence. Permission is required if the material is to be modified in any way or used in broad or multiple distribution. To access the online permission form, visit <https://www4.georgetown.edu/uis/keybridge/keyform/form.cfm?formID=3402>.

Georgetown University provides equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment practices for all persons and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, family responsibilities, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, matriculation, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or another factor prohibited by law. Inquiries regarding Georgetown University's non-discrimination policy may be addressed to the Director of Affirmative Action Programs, Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action, 37th & O Streets, N.W., Suite M36, Darnall Hall, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20005.



Engaging Ethnic Media to Inform Communities About Safe Infant Sleep

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Understand Your Audience	2
Know What Reporters Need to Tell Your Story	4
Ethnic Television	4
Ethnic Radio	5
Ethnic Newspapers, Magazines and Online Outlets	6
Shape Your Story to Make an Impact	8
Establish Relationships With Reporters	9
Use the Right Tools to Engage Ethnic Media Outlets	11
Learn More.....	15
Endnotes.....	16





Engaging Ethnic Media to Inform Communities about Safe Infant Sleep

In today's digital information age, we rely on myriad resources to gather information about our health and wellness, ways to keep our families healthy and what's happening in our local communities. Despite the many different ways we can consume news — visually, in print, online and in person — there are tried and true sources we turn to for credible information about our communities and about our health and wellness. In fact, media outlets continue to be critical sources of information for local communities nationwide; according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 72 percent of adults are quite attached to following local news and information, and local newspapers are by far the source they rely on for much of the local information they need.¹

While general market media has the capacity to reach broad audiences within a community, nearly half of African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian-American, Native American and Arab-American adults — 29 million Americans — prefer ethnic television, radio or newspapers to their mainstream counterparts.² That means that if you're trying to reach these audiences with information about safe sleep promotion, focusing outreach efforts on ethnic media may be the most effective strategy. Yet it's not enough to send out general information to ethnic media; you must tailor your efforts to be effective.

Media outreach can be one of the most cost-effective ways to educate people about sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and safe sleep. The investment you make is an investment of your time to build relationships and become a reliable resource for reporters. This toolkit provides some guidance on how to engage ethnic media so that you can make the greatest impact through your outreach activities. The focus of the toolkit is on strategies to help you reach those communities most at risk for SUID — African-Americans; Hispanics/Latinos, particularly Puerto Ricans; and Native Americans — but the principles shared can be applied when reaching out to media in any community.³

A Snapshot of General Media Outlets in America

The digital information revolution has introduced countless new ways to engage with audiences who need to better understand safe sleep promotion. The majority of adults living in the U.S. use at least three different types of media every week to get news and information about their community, which means that, while ethnic media is critically important to educating the community about safe sleep promotion, it's also important to include media outlets that reach a wide number of people. The following types of media reach such a broad audience, they are hard to ignore:

- **Online:** Seventy-eight percent of American adults use the Internet and 62 percent of Americans go online daily. The most active group of Internet users is the 18- to 29-year-old segment — 93 percent use the Internet.⁴
- **Television:** Americans spend approximately 30 percent of the day (8 hours and 21 minutes) watching television. Nearly three-fourths of adults go to local TV news for information, topping local newspaper and radio station sites, as well as other local sites.⁵

Continued



A Snapshot of General Media Outlets in America *(continued)*

- **Radio:** Two out of three Americans listen to the radio during prime time (or “drive time”); radio is their first source of news in the day. The Radio Advertising Bureau estimates that 53 percent of the workforce listens to the radio at work, and 84 percent of adults tune in while driving.⁶
- **Newspapers:** Older Americans are most likely to read the newspaper, with 59 percent of adults over the age of 65 reading a daily newspaper, followed by 49 percent of adults ages 55 to 64, 41 percent of adults ages 45 to 54, 31 percent of adults ages 35 to 44, 24 percent of adults ages 25 to 34, and 23 percent of adults ages 18 to 24.⁷

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

The first step in any effective media outreach effort is identifying your audience. Are you trying to reach young parents, parents-to-be, elders, faith-based leaders? Once you’ve identified your key audiences, the next step is to become familiar with the main sources of news and information that your audience relies on. Not every member of the community can be reached in the same way. If you’re trying to educate ethnically diverse families, you’ll want to include ethnic media in your outreach efforts. For example, Spanish-language radio continues to be a powerful medium for engaging Hispanics/Latinos. In many communities, the DJs on Spanish-language radio stations are highly trusted information sources for anything from health advice to marriage counseling. In many cases, engaging a mix of general market and ethnic media, as well as communicating in culturally and linguistically competent ways, is the most effective outreach strategy.

Identifying your key audiences can be challenging. Yet with limited resources, it’s critically important that you design outreach activities to reach a specific audience, rather than the general public. Answer the following questions to help you identify your key audiences:

- Who in your community is most affected by SUID?
- Who in your community needs to know more about safe infant sleep so they can promote it?
- Who in your community can help you spread the word about safe sleep promotion? Do you need to educate these audiences about safe infant sleep before they can become champions for your issue?

The next step is to learn about the media outlets your audience turns to for information about issues that matter to them. You may want to convene a small cross-section of your key audiences to discuss the following questions, or check in with some other community-based organizations that work directly with your audiences. For example, faith-based organizations are highly regarded as sources of information for many within ethnic communities. Contact several in your community to help develop an effective outreach strategy to educate your shared



constituencies about safe infant sleep. These questions can help guide your conversation and provide the information you need for your media outreach plan.

- What media outlets do your audiences follow? Do your audiences prefer ethnic or general market media, or both?
- Do these media outlets focus on a specific ethnic population? If so, what are the demographics of the audience the media outlet serves?
- Is there a particularly popular radio or television program or media personality known for keeping people in your community informed about the latest news and health issues?
- Do radio news programs feature interviews with local personalities, and are they appropriate forums to address potentially sensitive topics?
- Are there journalists in your community who specialize in reporting on topics of ethnic and racial interest? Journalists with this focus can often be found at daily newspapers and larger online and print publications, and may be particularly interested in educating the community about safe sleep promotion among the community they cover.
- Are there community publications that reach African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and other ethnically diverse families, and are they considered credible sources of health information?
- Is there a city- or neighborhood-specific website that features local happenings and user commentaries?
- What reporters cover health issues of interest to ethnically diverse families?
- Do community leaders or local media personalities blog about local happenings?
- When sending information to the media, will you need to produce materials in English, Spanish or other languages for them to be useful to reporters?

What Is Cultural Competence?

The NCCC defines cultural competence as a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum (adapted from Cross et al., 1989).⁸

Cultural competence requires that organizations:

- Have a congruent, defined set of values and principles and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.
- Have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to the diversity and cultural contexts of communities they serve.
- Incorporate the above into all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice and service delivery and systematically involve consumers, key stakeholders and communities.



Accessing Safe Infant Sleep Information Resources

Explaining the difference between sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and SUID or helping people understand the history of SUID in the U.S. can be challenging, even when you're an expert on the issue. Imagine how this complex topic could be confusing to the media and other audiences you are trying to reach. For definitions, recent data and other resources that make SIDS and SUID easier to understand, visit www.sidscenter.org.

Working with African-American Media

Where do African-Americans get news?

- African-Americans get their news from various sources — television, Internet, mobile/digital and newspapers. Radio has the least engagement, with only 9 percent of African-Americans using it for their main news source.
- The majority of African-Americans (86 percent) prefer to get their news from television. Forty-nine percent of African-Americans go online daily and 30 percent of African-Americans read daily newspapers.
- 63 percent of African-American Internet users visit social networking sites regularly.

Continued

KNOW WHAT REPORTERS NEED TO TELL YOUR STORY

Before you're ready to pick up the phone and pitch your story about safe sleep promotion, it is important to gather all of the information you need to persuade reporters to tell your story and tell it well. While the same story may appeal to reporters in every media outlet, each has specific needs that you will have to consider before you reach out. Especially at ethnic media outlets, reporters have specific needs that will make it easier for them to cover safe sleep promotion and educate your audiences. Use the following guidelines and questions to determine if your story is a good fit with these different types of ethnic media outlets.

Ethnic Television

- A station may offer talk shows and public affairs programs that can provide an excellent opportunity to feature local safe infant sleep experts, such as a pediatrician or other health provider that is trusted and respected by your audience. These shows, which on average last half an hour, provide public educators with an excellent opportunity to deliver their messages unfiltered by reporters or editors — directly to the audience.
- Local cable access channels with health and family features are another resource you can approach. While this programming is not specific to any one population, it is often an influential community news resource across audiences.
- Visuals can make or break a television spot. To get the attention of local television crews, create an opportunity for good TV with an exciting event or by sharing clips of your spokesperson or safe infant sleep expert to illustrate his or her camera-ready appeal. Remember that it is critical for ethnic television that your visuals and spokespeople represent the cultural experiences of the audience.
- Language counts. If you are pitching an ethnic television station that broadcasts in another language, make sure you have spokespeople who are fluent in that language and comfortable talking about complex health issues in that language as well. The same is true for radio.



Consider: Do you have a good visual? Can your story about safe infant sleep be told in pictures and not words? Can you get your message across in a 30- to 60-second spot? Do you have a spokesperson that is culturally appropriate and prepared for television interviews in the native language of the station's audience?

Ethnic Radio

- The kind of news coverage a station produces is frequently a function of the station's size. Where large stations will attend press conferences, smaller ones without reporters to dispatch might prefer to do on-air or recorded interviews via telephone. Small- and medium-sized stations might be willing to take pre-taped comments from your group (called "actualities") over the telephone, while larger stations probably will want to conduct their own interviews. Overall, most ethnic radio stations tend to be smaller, with limited news rooms. Consider what prepared content you can give the station to enhance its coverage of the issue.
- Many ethnic radio stations will provide stories in a variety of languages for a culturally diverse audience to serve a larger cross-section of audiences living within a community. Become familiar with the station so that you're clear which programming is appropriate for the audience you are trying to reach.
- Call-in shows — live programs where the show's host and guest take questions for listeners at home — are popular among ethnic radio stations and offer a valuable opportunity to get in-depth on the issue of safe sleep promotion. Because these shows are live and questions are often unpredictable, be sure that your expert or family member is well-prepared and can answer complex questions in short sound bites, whether in English or the preferred language of the station.
- Sound is critical to a good radio story. In addition to having good news, you can increase your chances of radio play by having something that sounds terrific. Good sound effects or a colorful, "quotable quote" (a 10- to 15-second phrase or sentence that sums up your message in a memorable way) will significantly improve your chances for radio coverage.

Working with African-American Media (*continued*)

- African-American Internet users are more likely than Latinos or whites to use Twitter. One in 10 African-American Internet users visits Twitter on a typical day, double the rate for Latinos and nearly four times the rate for whites.

Tips for working with African-American media outlets:

- **Share** the story about safe sleep promotion in multiple ways that engage ethnic media on television, online and in print, since African-Americans get news in a variety of places.
- **Provide** media outlets with short, concise text and shortened links to additional resources using a service like bit.ly so they can share information about safe sleep promotion on their social media channels.
- **Find** families willing to share their story about safe sleep promotion with African-American media outlets. It's important that the story be specific to the African-American community where you live.^{9,10,11}



Working with Hispanic/Latino Media

Where do Hispanics/Latinos get news?

- Radio is by far the most ubiquitous media format for reaching Hispanics. More than 95 percent of Hispanics tune into radio for news, and most — nearly 85 percent of Hispanics ages 25 to 54 — listen on the weekends.
- Mobile/digital media is a preferred format for receiving news among Hispanics, with 78 percent getting their news from handheld devices like a smart phone.
- Bilingual and English-dominant Hispanics use Internet and mobile/digital media far more than Spanish-dominant Latinos, but Spanish-dominant Internet usage is increasing.
- Weekly newspapers are most common amongst this audience, with 23 percent of Hispanics reading daily newspapers.
- Sixty-five percent of Hispanic Internet users visit social networking sites regularly.

Continued

- The majority of radio stations have sister websites that are hungry for news. These sites typically will post information about community events, partner organizations and tips for healthy living, making them a good fit for information about safe sleep promotion.

Consider: Do you have a quotable quote? Does your spokesperson have a good radio voice? Are there background sounds you can provide to the station to make your message sound more compelling?

Ethnic Newspapers, Magazines and Online Outlets

- Newspaper companies are transforming into information companies, combining their traditional print formats with online and sometimes even radio and television counterparts. Many ethnic daily and community newspapers now have websites that publish the news of the day along with web exclusives, videos, blogs, podcasts and live chats.
- Most ethnic media outlets publish weekly or even monthly, which gives them more flexibility with their deadlines than broadcast reporters. However, such a long lead time requires advance planning to time a story about safe sleep promotion with a specific event. Know reporters' deadlines and work within their requirements.
- Magazines often go to print weeks or months before they appear on newsstands. For successful outreach, remember the deadlines of these publications. Publications other than news weeklies are often written from 1 to 3 months in advance of the magazine's publishing date, and thus are planned 6 to 9 months in advance.
- Many ethnic newspapers and other outlets have online versions that can reach a broader audience about safe sleep promotion.
- While it is always best to provide an ethnic media outlet with a spokesperson that is able to communicate in the paper's preferred language, most reporters are bilingual, making it easier to leverage an English-speaking spokesperson whose comments can be translated prior to printing or posting the story.



- Many ethnic media outlets have a social media presence. Work with the reporter to find ways to use their social networking platforms and microblogging sites like Facebook and Twitter to tell more of the story about safe sleep promotion through live chats, graphics and conversations with the outlet's audience.

Consider: Does your story require some in-depth discussion of a topic? Do you have the supporting resources to provide to the reporter that will help him or her write a better story? Will you be able to provide interviews and data on deadline?

Working with Hispanic/Latino Media (*continued*)

Tips for working with Hispanic/Latino media outlets:

- **Have** materials available in both Spanish and English. Many English-dominant Hispanics/Latinos also engage with Spanish-language media.
- **Work** with a professional translator when translating materials, and always have a fluent and/or native speaker review the materials to ensure clarity and cultural competence. By skipping professional translation, there is a risk that complex terms and phrases will be translated incorrectly, which can damage your credibility, diminish trust in the community and do more harm than good.
- **Tailor** your messages about safe infant sleep to meet the needs of your audience based on their family's native country; the Hispanic/Latino experience is not ubiquitous. A recent Pew Research study shows that the majority of Hispanics don't identify as such — 51 percent identify by their family's country of origin and only 24 percent prefer a pan-ethnic (Hispanic/Latino) label.
- **Remember** that, while Hispanic/Latino populations often have the lowest rates of SUID, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that Puerto Ricans specifically are at higher risk for SUID.^{12,13,14,15,16}

Working with Native American Media

Where do Native Americans get news?

- Regardless of where they live, Native Americans have limited Internet connectivity. Fewer than half have broadband access at home, but they are still accessing news online, relying on mobile/digital handheld devices as information resources.
- Radio remains the most prevalent medium for Native Americans, and broadcasts air in both English and tribal languages. The number of radio stations serving Native communities increased by 45 percent in 2011.
- Many Native communities continue to rely on tribal newspapers for information, and hundreds exist that are hyper-local — focused on the news of tribes and villages nationwide.

Tips for working with Native American media outlets:

- **Consider** easily sharable content when preparing your story. Images should be smaller and text shorter. By sharing content this way, it will be easier for reporters at Native outlets to publish your story on their mobile and digital platforms.

Continued

SHAPE YOUR STORY TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Knowing what a reporter wants in a pitch is only one piece of the equation. It's also important to provide a newsworthy story about safe sleep promotion. Ask yourself what will make the reporter want to tell this story right now.

Here is a list of qualities to help you determine the newsworthiness of your story. Each of these elements alone may not make your story newsworthy, but if several apply, you probably have a story worth pitching to reporters.

It's newsworthy if ...

- It's new — something that no one has ever said or heard before (e.g., new report, new data, new survey, etc.).
- It's timely — yesterday's news is old news. What's timely about safe infant sleep now?
- It involves a public figure, a celebrity or a well-known organization.
- It's unusual or ironic.
- It has a strong human-interest angle (e.g., you can provide local families as spokespeople).
- It's visual (for television and photography).
- It centers on an event or happening.
- It affects a large number of people (e.g., local statistics by ethnicity/race).
- It's dramatic or compelling.
- It's a variation on a theme already receiving media attention.
- It's interesting on an otherwise slow news day.
- It benefits a large number of readers, viewers or listeners.
- It pulls at people's heartstrings.
- It includes compelling data that support your messages.
- It provides the ethnic and/or local perspective on a broader, national issue.



ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH REPORTERS

Regardless of your media savvy, the idea of pitching a reporter likely makes you a little nervous or maybe even a little uncomfortable. Pitching the media, especially making that cold call, can be unnerving. They might hang up, they might ask you a question you can't answer or they might even run your story! Building a relationship with a local reporter begins by picking up the phone and making a pitch.

Here are a few points to keep in mind before you make that first call:

- Reporters need you! A reporter is only as good as his or her sources, and reporters at ethnic media outlets need credible health information. The minute you agree to talk to reporters, you become a new resource for information about safe infant sleep that they can rely on in the future.
- If you're calling a reporter from an ethnic outlet, consider language needs. While most reporters at these outlets are multi-lingual, it goes a long way if you begin the conversation in their preferred language. If you're not comfortable reaching out in a language other than English, see if you can find a colleague to help you establish that relationship.
- You may not be used to pitching, but they are. Your pitch call is probably one of 10, 20 or 100 calls that reporter has received in a single day. While your pitch needs to stand out, your uninvited call is not the first that reporter has received. However, be aware that most ethnic media outlets are short-staffed. If the reporter is too busy to take your call, identify when he or she may have more time to talk about safe sleep promotion or find out what they need to cover the issue. They may even ask you to write the story for them!
- Find out how the reporter likes to communicate. Some prefer email, others text messaging, Facebook, Twitter or in-person meetings. Ask him or her during your first outreach call or email. Work where reporters are comfortable and they'll respect your willingness to meet them where they are.

Working with Native American Media (*continued*)

- **Try** using mobile apps and podcasts to share your message. Various news outlets are making their own apps, and your content can be downloaded directly into the audience's phones. This means you could work with outlets to create a "best practices" checklist for safe infant sleep and safe sleep promotion and easily distribute this to your audience.
- **Contact** tribal governments, which own many Native media and can be good sources for identifying these outlets in the Native communities you are trying to reach.¹⁷



Preparing for Outreach to Ethnic Media

- Understand the community's knowledge about safe infant sleep and cultural factors that may influence behaviors related to safe sleeping habits, such as the role of autonomy in decision making; expectations of new parents and family members; beliefs about SUID causation; and beliefs about formal health care settings.
 - Be careful to avoid generalizations and stereotypes about the community you are trying to reach; for example, *some or many* people in a community may benefit from learning about safe sleeping habits and strategies for safe sleep promotion, rather than *every* person in the community.
 - Be aware of the programs that may already exist in the community to promote child health and safe sleep to the audiences you are trying to engage, and reference those in your outreach.
 - Identify a spokesperson representative of the community and able to speak fluently about safe infant sleep in the preferred language of the media outlet. Keep in mind that you may need to provide talking points to help your spokesperson maintain control over the interview.
- Remember, you can only be quoted if you say it. While it can be challenging for reporters to understand the complexities of safe infant sleep, it is risky to provide an explanation or analogy you wouldn't be comfortable seeing in print or hearing broadcast on the evening news. Instead of providing background information "off-the-record" to educate a reporter, it may be helpful to prepare a background document with key points and facts about safe infant sleep. This will help them get the story right and put you at ease.
 - Reach out even when you don't need anything from them. Like any good relationship, reporters expect some give and take. Congratulate them on a story well written. Share a study you've seen (even if it's from another organization) that may help them on future stories. Graciously correct them if misinformation about safe infant sleep is reported. And most important, acknowledge when they cover the topic effectively, but never thank them for doing their job.

Continued



USE THE RIGHT TOOLS TO ENGAGE ETHNIC MEDIA OUTLETS

Now that you know which outlets and reporters will best reach ethnically diverse families in your community, you've determined your story is newsworthy and gathered the information you need to share your story about safe sleep promotion, consider the many ways you can engage ethnic media. Outreach to traditional media, such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines, relies on capturing reporters' and editors' interest, and includes the use of press releases, writing opinion articles, setting up editorial board meetings and promoting events in community calendars. Alternatively, digital media outlets like blogs and social media allow users to interact directly with their audiences. Since more and more diverse audiences are going online for their information, both approaches can be effective in sharing information about safe sleep promotion.

Press Releases: Press releases are statements that inform reporters about noteworthy information that affects the community, and are excellent tools to give reporters updates about safe infant sleep strategies. Effective press releases are timely, present something that impacts the outlet's audience, offer local news, give useful information, highlight the human interest angle, or feature a well-known or respected community member or organization. If an outlet you are targeting produces news in a language other than English, be sure to provide your press release in that language.

Op-ed Articles: Found "opposite the editorial page," op-ed articles appear in most print and online versions of ethnic newspapers and create an opportunity for you to express your thoughts about the reality of safe infant sleep, correct common misperceptions about it and offer strategies for safe sleep promotion in your community. Consider connecting your op-ed to broader themes related to child and maternal health and family wellness. Remember, op-eds need to offer an opinion about something that is happening in your community.

Op-eds should begin with a powerful introductory statement that captures the reader's interest by connecting your thoughts to recent events. Effective op-eds clearly express an opinion, cite evidence to prove your point and mention specific people. The final paragraph and closing

Preparing for Outreach to Ethnic Media (*continued*)

- Provide specific examples of SUID in the community and clear tips for safe sleep promotion. It is important to be versed in the latest data specific to the population that you are trying to reach. The National SUID/SIDS Resource Center at www.sidscenter.org has data to help you illustrate the impact of safe infant sleep in your community. In addition, local health departments, universities and medical centers may be valuable partners able to provide you with accurate local-level data about safe infant sleep.
- Avoid jargon. Discussing complex health issues like safe sleep promotion can often result in a verbose, complicated conversation. Try to simplify the information for the media outlet's audience, which often averages a third-grade reading level. Online-Utility.org offers a free tool to help you determine the reading level of your materials in English using the Flesch-Kinkaid method. While free and foolproof tools to test the reading level of materials in Spanish are harder to find, the Fernandez-Huerta method serves as a good jumping-off point for this purpose. And of course, it is always important to share material with your audience to get feedback from them directly concerning readability.



A Checklist for Engaging Ethnic Media

- ✓ **Determine** who in your community is most affected by SUID and would benefit from education about safe sleep promotion.
- ✓ **Learn** about your audience's preferences for gathering health information and information about local issues. Put together an informal group that represents your key audiences to gather this information.
- ✓ **Identify** ethnic media outlets in your community and determine whether these are effective tools for reaching your audience. Some websites that can be helpful for finding these outlets include: www.tunein.com, www.newamericanmedia.org and www.kidon.com/media-link/us_ethnic.php.
- ✓ **Identify** media outlets that your audience trusts and become familiar with the outlets' news coverage and format (e.g., Do they run news broadcasts live? Do they have public affairs programming and take guests? Do they produce content in English, Spanish or another language? Do they air public service announcements?).

Continued

argument serve as your last opportunity to draw readers to your point of view. They also offer solutions to the problem, repeat the idea of the introduction and remind readers of the relevance of your issue.

Guidelines for submitting op-eds can often be found on the outlet's website, but note that op-eds should be no longer than 800 words and can appear in both print and online outlets. If the outlet you are targeting with your op-ed produces stories in a language other than English, be prepared to submit your op-ed in that language as well, even if the author isn't fluent in it. Even some television stations offer community forums where their viewers can share their opinions on local news. Some newspapers, like smaller ethnic publications, offer guest columns if they don't have a traditional op-ed page. Get creative and you can find countless opportunities to place opinion pieces. Just remember that each op-ed is exclusive to the outlet where it first appears, and can only be reprinted with permission from that outlet.

Editorial Board Meetings and Desk-Side Meetings: Every publication has a group of people in the editorial department who set the opinion of the paper. At ethnic media outlets, which tend to have smaller editorial departments, you may meet with a publisher or editor who is responsible for setting the tone of the publication. In addition, there are reporters and editors who are thought leaders at their papers and on the issue they cover. Meeting with the editorial boards of daily and community newspapers, or reporters covering child and maternal health in your area, provides a chance to inform them of the impact SUID has on your community, especially among ethnically diverse families; common misperceptions related to safe infant sleep; programs that are contributing to safe sleep promotion in your community; and what is needed to ensure safe infant sleep. In addition, introducing yourself to these media thought leaders reinforces your role as a resource on child and maternal health, and increases the likelihood that reporters from these publications will call on your expertise for future stories. Go to the meeting equipped with compelling data about the prevalence of SUID among the population that the outlet serves; for example, the disparity between rates of SUID among communities of color and white families and the root causes for those disparities. Ideally, bring someone who represents the audience of the media outlet with you to the meeting. For



example, if you are going to an editorial board meeting of a Spanish-language weekly newspaper with a largely Hispanic/Latino readership, invite a Spanish-speaking Hispanic/Latino family who is willing to talk about the impact of SUID or a Hispanic/Latino health practitioner to join you at the meeting.

Community Calendars: These calendars usually run free on local television channels and in community and ethnic newspapers, and they are ideal venues to tell your community about events and activities you are hosting on safe sleep promotion. A short email with the specific information about your event is usually enough to alert the calendar editors. A follow-up phone call doesn't hurt, though!

Graphics: You can incorporate graphics such as infographics, pie charts, line graphs and bar graphs into many types of media tools, and given the visual nature of most media today, this is a recommended approach. Graphics help clearly illustrate data related to safe infant sleep, and can often add value to the story for reporters, increasing the shareability of your content online. The more localized the graphics, the better. If you are reaching out to a Native American media outlet, a graphic featuring tribal art will likely capture the interest of the editor or reporter more readily.

Drop-in Article: Drop-in articles, also known as camera-ready news, are a cost-effective way to spread information about safe sleep promotion. A drop-in article is a type of news article that is written for direct insertion in community and weekly newspapers. If space is available, include a reader-friendly graphic to enhance the aesthetic of the article. Community newspapers and ethnic media outlets tend to have much smaller staffs than larger daily papers, sometimes only including an editor and several staff or contributing writers, so these papers are in need of editorials at times. Don't be afraid to focus on a wide range of outlets for drop-in distribution; the more places that receive your drop-in, the higher the odds of placement. Do be sure, however, that your article includes tips for safe sleeping, provides a resource where readers can find more information, is no more than 500 words, is written at no higher than the third-grade reading level and is written in the preferred language of the publications you are pitching. Submit the article with a short cover note in an email or a letter that outlines the importance of safe infant

A Checklist for Engaging Ethnic Media *(continued)*

- ✓ **Target** reporters who cover issues related to family health, health and wellness, local community news or who appear to have an interest in infant health. Get familiar with their stories so that you're knowledgeable when you make your pitch. Become a consumer of the media you're trying to engage, or partner with someone who is.
- ✓ **Gather** the resources you need to educate your audiences effectively through the media outlets in your community (e.g., in-language spokespeople, facts about safe infant sleep that are relatable to the community, stories about SUID from families that represent the media outlets' audiences). Be aware of the type of media outlet and its unique information needs, including language preferences.
- ✓ **Prepare** spokespeople who represent the community and can share their story in the outlet's preferred language. Putting a face to the story helps capture reporters' interest and makes the story relatable to other ethnically diverse families. Asking a trusted voice in the community to share the safe infant sleep story can engage more families and amplify your message.
- ✓ **Reach out!** Share your newsworthy story with ethnic media in your community using tools like a press release or an op-ed.



sleep to the outlet's readership. Your short cover note has to make the case for publication (see how to determine newsworthiness on page 8 of this toolkit).

Community Engagement: Your efforts to inform your key audiences about safe infant sleep do not have to be limited to traditional, ethnic or new media outlets. In some cases, the place where your audiences may want to gather information about the health of their families may be completely unrelated to the media. People like to learn from the people they trust and in the environments where they are most comfortable. Consider engaging organizations and groups in your community that work directly with communities of color to see how best to get information about safe sleep promotion to their constituents.

Some examples of relevant organizations, businesses and groups might include:

- Schools, including colleges and universities.
- Government buildings and courthouses.
- Community and neighborhood associations and civic organizations.
- Churches, synagogues and other faith-based organizations.
- Shopping malls, supermarkets and drug stores.
- Youth and parks and recreation centers.
- Health clubs.
- Spas, salons and barbershops.
- Local businesses.
- Hospitals, clinics and health centers.
- Libraries.
- Zoos and museums.
- Venues for sporting events, concerts and theater productions.
- Laundromats.
- Bus stops, train stations and other public transportation facilities.



LEARN MORE

The National SUID/SIDS Resource Center Consortium

For data and information resources about safe infant sleep.

www.sidscenter.org

The resource center for the national sudden & unexpected infant/child death and pregnancy loss consortium.

Media Evaluation Project.org

For case studies of effective media relations and advocacy campaigns.

www.mediaevaluationproject.org

National Association of Broadcasters

For information about working with reporters at radio and television outlets.

www.nab.org

National Cancer Institute, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Making Health Communication Programs Work

For strategies and planning tools to guide and shape your communications activities.

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/cancerlibrary/pinkbook

New America Media

For information about ethnic media outlets nationwide.

www.newamericamedia.org

News College Practical Journalism Tips

For tips and strategies to strengthen your media writing skills.

www.newscollege.ca

Newspaper Association of America

For information about working with reporters at print and online newspapers.

www.naa.org

Pew Internet & American Life Project

For the most recent demographic data about the way people in the U.S. communicate.

www.pewinternet.org

Pew Research Center

Pew Hispanic Center

For the most recent demographic data about Hispanics living in the U.S.

www.pewhispanic.org

Radio Advertising Bureau

For information about working with reporters at radio stations.

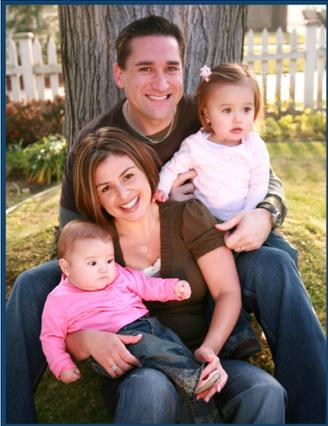
www.rab.com

Safe to Sleep Campaign

For information about ways to promote safe sleep, including information specific to Native and African-American babies.

www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/





ENDNOTES

- ¹ Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2012, April). *Local News Enthusiasts*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Local-news-enthusiasts/Summary-of-Findings.aspx>
- ² New America Media. (2012, May). *Ethnic Media Here To Stay and Growing — A National Study on the Penetration of Ethnic Media in America, 2009*. Retrieved from http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=cef90deffc1b85bfb7253499cd65040b
- ³ National Center for Health Statistics. (2008). *Recent Trends in Infant Mortality in the United States* (NCHS data brief No. 9). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db09.htm>
- ⁴ Rainie, L. (2010, January). *Report: Internet, broadband, and cell phone statistics*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Internet-broadband-and-cell-phone-statistics/Report.aspx>
- ⁵ Rosenstiel, T., Mitchell, A., Purcell, K., & Rainie, L. (2011, September). *How People Learn About Their Local Community*. *Pew Research Center: Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=85899364439
- ⁶ Radio Advertising Bureau. (2012). *Why Radio Fact Sheets*. Retrieved from <http://www.rab.com/whyRadio/WRFacts.cfm>
- ⁷ Pew Research Center: Project for Excellence in Journalism. (2012, March). *The State of the News Media 2012: An Annual Report of American Journalism*. Retrieved from <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2012/>
- ⁸ Conceptual Frameworks/Models, Guiding Values and Principles. *National Center for Cultural Competence*. Retrieved August 20, 2012, from <http://nccc.georgetown.edu/foundations/frameworks.html>
- ⁹ Guskin, E., Moore, P., & Mitchell, A. (2011). *African American Media: Evolving in the New Era*. *Pew Research Center: Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Retrieved from <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2011/african-american/>
- ¹⁰ Smith, A. (2011, January). *Technology and People of Color*. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2011/Jan/Social-Media-Trends-Among-Communities-of-Color.aspx>
- ¹¹ Smith, A. (2011, June). *Twitter Update 2011*. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved from <http://pewinternet.org/%20Reports/2011/Twitter-Update-2011.aspx>
- ¹² National Center for Health Statistics. (2008). *Recent Trends in Infant Mortality in the United States*.
- ¹³ Allen, G. (2012, April). *Media Outlets Adapt to Growing Hispanic Audience*. *NPR*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/03/149845056/media-outlets-adapt-to-growing-hispanic-audience>
- ¹⁴ Arbitron. (2011). *Hispanic Radio Today 2011 Edition: How Americans Listen to Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.arbitron.com/study/hisprtr.asp>
- ¹⁵ Taylor, P., Lopez, M. H., Martinez, J. H., & Velasco, G. (2012, April). *When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity*. *Pew Research Center: Pew Hispanic Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/>
- ¹⁶ Smith, A. (2011, January). *Technology and People of Color*.
- ¹⁷ Guskin, E., & Mitchell, A. (2011). *Innovating News in Native Communities*. *Pew Research Center: Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Retrieved from <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2012/native-american-news-media/>