

Baby Business

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Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team



Tanya Gonzales, doula coordinator, and Bethany Guillory, special projects coordinator, deliver memory boxes

The Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties is proud to be a part of the local **Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) team** for District 1, which encompasses Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties. We collaborate closely with The National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention to address the factors and issues impacting fetal and infant deaths. Through comprehensive case reviews, we aim to gain insights into systemic issues within our district. Coalition staff attend and lead monthly discussions with medical providers and community partners to address cases that resulted in a fetal demise or infant death.

In order to support and inspire hope through remembrance, the coalition invested in Memory Boxes from **Project Sweet Peas**, a non-profit that creates keepsake items for parents who have experienced a loss. These special keepsake boxes were delivered to our local ObGyn offices and labor and delivery hospitals, so they can offer them to parents who have suffered the loss of a baby through a miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death.

In 1988, President Regan proclaimed October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Month, with Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day being observed every year on October 15th. It is vital to acknowledge the often devastating stress and sadness that a miscarriage or loss of a newborn baby can place on a parent, family members, friends, and healthcare providers who provide prenatal and delivery services. We recognize that healing may vary from one person to another, but support can be crucial to moving forward from such a loss.

This October, Healthy Start of Okaloosa and Walton Counties held its inaugural event, "**Light to Remember**". Dr. Elizabeth Michas, founder of MindWorks Psychology, joined us and spoke about heartbreak resolution and support services for those recovering from post-

traumatic stress disorders. Director of Women and Children at HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital, Jane Bradley, R.N., spoke about the comfort and services provided if a family experiences a pregnancy loss or the loss of a child. The event ended with the lighting of candles, honoring the precious babies who forever left footprints on the hearts of those who love them.



Spotlight On:

Maternal and Child Health Community Champion



SrA Nicole Fredeluces and Cristina Barrios
with the Eglin 96th Medical Group OB/Gyn
office

A BIG thank you to Eglin Air Force Base OB/Gyn office for their support of the Healthy Start mission and the pregnant women receiving care at the 96th Medical Group. We appreciate the detail that the staff puts into ensuring that the Healthy Start Health Risk Screening forms are accurately completed. Their professionalism in this screening process is crucial in our ability to identify and refer potential Healthy Start clients and home-visiting recipients. We recognize them as Community Champions for maternal and child health!



There are about 3,500 sleep-related deaths among U.S. babies every year. These deaths include sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), accidental suffocation and deaths from unknown causes. Suffocation is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for infants under the age of one.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Safe Sleep Month

Safe Sleep Month is observed every October with the aim of raising awareness among parents and caregivers about safe sleep practices for infants. The goal is to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other

sleep-related deaths. During this month, families and healthcare providers are encouraged to promote appropriate sleep environments, such as placing infants on their backs to sleep, avoiding soft bedding, and keeping the sleeping area free from any items that may cause suffocation or entrapment. Maintaining a safe sleep environment for your baby is essential to ensure their safety and improve their health outcomes. Safe Sleep Month serves as a reminder that small changes in sleeping habits can greatly impact the health and safety of babies.

WHAT DOES A SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?

The following image shows a safe sleep environment for baby.



-  Room share: Give babies their own sleep space in your room, separate from your bed.
-  Use a firm, flat, and level sleep surface, covered only by a fitted sheet.
-  Remove everything from baby's sleep area, except a fitted sheet to cover the mattress. No objects, toys, or other items.
-  Use a wearable blanket to keep baby warm without blankets in the sleep area.
-  Place babies on their backs to sleep, for naps and at night.
-  Couches and armchairs are not safe for baby to sleep on alone, with people, or with pets.
-  Keep baby's surroundings smoke/vape free.



The Consumer Product Safety Commission sets safety standards for infant sleep surfaces (such as a mattress) and sleep spaces (like a crib). Visit <https://www.cpsc.gov/SafeSleep> to learn more.



Together, we can use these statistics and life-saving tips to protect infants – every nap and every night:

[Safe Sleep Information & Toolkit](#)

[Child Safety Data for Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths](#)

[Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths in the US Infographic](#)

[Infant Safe Sleep: An Intro and Model Program webinar](#)

Coalition News

Board Updates



Bonnie Barlow has been with Bridgeway Center, Inc. (BCI) for 38 years and has been the CEO since August 2018. Over the years, Bonnie has worked in many different positions at BCI and has been on the Board with Healthy Start since 2021. We now welcome her as our newest Board of Director's Chairperson. Bonnie considers it an honor and privilege to serve as the Board Chair for The Healthy Start Coalition. She believes that Healthy Start plays a vital role in promoting the well-being of infants and their families by ensuring that they have access to the necessary resources, support, and information they need to thrive. "Working with Healthy Start in achieving its mission aligns with our goals at BCI. We know that creating a solid and secure foundation – physically, emotionally, psychologically – is key to well-being and mental health. The dedication and passion of the Healthy Start team is truly inspiring!" We happily welcome Bonnie into her new role and look forward to the year ahead!



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Amy Herf** for her outstanding service as the Chairperson on our Healthy Start Board of Directors for the past two years. Amy served as the pivotal link between our organization and the North Okaloosa Medical Center when we successfully launched our Prenatal Care Program. This program offers crucial prenatal care to women without medicaid or medical insurance. Amy's dedication and leadership while chairing our board has made significant impact on the well-being of pregnant and parenting women, infants, and their families. **Amy (R)** is pictured here receiving a token of appreciation from our Executive Director, **Ardelle Bush (L)**.



Studies estimated that 46% of car seats and booster seats are used incorrectly in a way that could reduce their effectiveness

National Seat Check Saturday

Car Seat Safety Event



Pictured: (left) Local Certified Child Passenger Safety Techs following the event. (right) One of Okaloosa's cutest residents approved of his car seat check!

National Seat Check Saturday is observed every year on the fourth Saturday in September, during Child Passenger Safety Week. This day was started by The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to promote child safety and increase awareness regarding child car seats being chosen correctly and installed properly. These efforts were put into action due to rising numbers of car accidents leading to countless injuries and deaths of children that could have been prevented if they had followed proper safety protocols. On September 23rd, Healthy Start partnered with Volkswagen Fort Walton Beach (Step One Automotive) to participate in a National Seat Check Saturday event. During the event, certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) were on hand to provide free education on how to properly use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts. Technicians helped educate families on choosing the right car seat for a child, installing the seat correctly, and using the seat correctly every time. They also discussed the importance of registering car seats with manufacturers, and what to do if the seat is subject to a safety recall. We had over 30 people attend this inaugural event and the CPSTs completed 20 car seat and booster checks. The event was a great success as it provided families with the knowledge and resources to keep their children safe while on the road and continue to raise awareness of the importance of child passenger safety.

To schedule a car seat check or stay updated with upcoming seat check events, please contact Miranda at Healthy Start Okaloosa-Walton.



Our next Access Meeting will be held on Dec 13th

If you are interested in attending or have a work associate that would benefit from learning about helpful resources in our community, please click the link and sign up for [Access](#)

[Meeting invites.](#)



Healthy Start's Fatherhood Coach, Alfred Holland

TEAM Dad is currently accepting referrals for our fatherhood engagement program. We aim to enhance the health and well-being of children and families by supporting, encouraging, and promoting fathers' roles in their children's lives. Follow the QR code or [click here](#) and let your journey begin with us!



Pictured here are a few of our T.E.A.M. Dad participants

Are you looking for Family Resources?

Click the button below for our Family Resource Directory.

If you would like a physical copy or are interested in being added to our next copy, please reach out to miranda@hsov.org.

[Resource Directory](#)



miranda@hsow.org |
<http://healthystartokawalton.org/>



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

Healthy Start is a free program that provides education and care coordination to pregnant women and families with children under the age of three.



Sponsored by HEALTHY START
MOMCARE NETWORK, INC. and
the State of Florida, Agency
for Health Care Administration



Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties | 102 Beal Pkwy SW, Suite B, Fort
Walton, FL 32548

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