



### **There is little evidence to support the very likeable idea of Finnish Baby Boxes.**

For generations, every baby born in Finland has gone home with a box full of gifts that includes diapers, bath products and onesies. And, as a bonus, the box itself has been promoted as a safe sleep environment for baby. In recent years, a series of [sharable articles](#) has been written connecting this program to Finland's low infant mortality rate. As a result, American policy makers [are starting to adopt the idea](#). The problem? There is almost no evidence that baby boxes have much to do with Finland's low infant mortality rate.

### **Why babies die less often in Finland**

Babies in America are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday than those born in Finland. In fact, Finland is one of the healthiest place on earth for babies. But, the health of their babies has much more to do with the health of their adults and community than their baby box program. Preterm birth is the leading cause of death in the United States. Finland's rate of preterm birth is 5.5% while the United States has a rate of 12%<sup>1</sup>. This difference is the main driver of the infant death disparity we see between Finland and the US. Other factors such as universal access to healthcare and extended maternity leave likely play a role in the country's low infant mortality rate as well.

### **Safe Sleep is essential, but cribs are safest**

The promotion of safe sleep environments is an essential component of any infant mortality reduction strategy. We welcome new and creative solutions to promote safe sleep and will carefully track communities that choose to pilot a baby box program. At this time, we prefer the known safety of a crib or pack n play to that of a baby box, which poses potential risks and does not have a significant evidence base to support its safety.

We have additional concerns about size. The boxes are designed only for newborns, and babies often grow out of them right around the time they are most at risk for a sleep-related death. If a family was relying on the box rather than a crib, they may be left without an appropriate sleep environment at the most vulnerable time for that baby.

We strongly prefer policies that help distribute cribs to families over those that provide alternative solutions. Simply put, a crib is the safest place for a baby to sleep. In Hamilton County, families who need access to a portable crib can get one for free by simply calling 211.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has convened a task force to examine the safety of baby boxes. We eagerly await the results of their assessment.

### **Other statements**

[The American Academy of Pediatrics](#): "Currently, the AAP Task Force on SIDS does not believe that there is yet enough evidence to say anything about the potential benefit or dangers of using baby boxes."

[Cribs For Kids](#): "There are NO studies available to support the claims being made about the box or even the frequency with which they are actually used as a sleep surface."