



Media Release

3 February 2010

## SIDS and Kids supports breakthrough SIDS research

SIDS and Kids supports groundbreaking research findings published today in the Journal of the American Medical Association linking low serotonin levels in infant brainstems to the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Brainstem research conducted by the Harvard group has discovered significantly lower levels of serotonin in the brainstems of babies who have died from SIDS. This research may assist in identifying infants at risk of SIDS in future.

Tragically this defect could not be detected prior to their death. As such, SIDS and Kids recommends parents and carers follow recognised safe sleeping practices to reduce the risk of SIDS and fatal sleep accidents.

- Sleep baby on back from birth, not tummy or side
- Sleep baby with face uncovered (no doonas, pillows, lambswool, bumpers or soft toys)
- Avoid exposing baby to tobacco smoke before birth and after
- Provide a safe sleeping environment (safe cot, safe mattress, safe bedding)
- Sleep baby in their own safe sleeping environment next to the parents' bed for the first six to twelve months of life

The American study furthers over 20 years of research into SIDS and was completed by a research group that has been conducting fundamental research on the brainstem. SIDS and Kids supports the use of autopsy results in SIDS research to provide valuable insights for parents and practitioners. "Autopsy based research provides increased knowledge on the causes of SIDS. Until the causes of SIDS can be detected in babies, it is important that the public is aware of our safe sleeping message as this is the best way to reduce the risk." said SIDS and Kids CEO Ms Leanne Raven.

SIDS and Kids is hosting an International Conference in Sydney on 8,9 and 10 October at which two of the key researches from the Harvard group have been invited to speak. It is envisaged that Dr Jhodie Duncan and Dr David Paterson will be presenting their research findings to peers at the *Precious Lives: Global collaboration in stillbirth and infant death* conference ([www.isaispid2010.com](http://www.isaispid2010.com)).

SIDS and Kids provides funding to support research into the causes of SIDS. SIDS and Kids is primarily funded through the support of the Australian community, in particular the annual Red Nose Day campaign.

Further information about safe sleeping and support available from SIDS and Kids can be found at [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)

**For more information or interview requests for Ms Raven, please contact:**

Please contact Eli Wallis at Style Counsel

[eli@stylecounsel.com.au](mailto:eli@stylecounsel.com.au) (03) 8506 1603 or 0420 557 118