



*Building better futures  
for Kentucky babies*

# KISS STARS Program Overview

Kentucky is introducing the Kentucky Infants Safe and Strong [KISS] Award program to recognize hospitals that are taking steps to implement evidence-based practices that will reduce the risk of Infant Mortality and move towards implementation of the Ten Steps for successful breastfeeding. A hospital will earn each “star” by implementing one infant safety step and two steps towards successful breastfeeding. The KISS STARS award program will award up to 5 STARS to hospitals; a five star hospital will have completed all 10 steps to successful breastfeeding by Baby Friendly USA and implemented at least 5 of the most critical infant safety measures.

Research has shown that hospitals that implement the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding have a significant impact on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. Hospitals that implement at least 6 of the Baby Friendly steps had a 96.8% of their breastfeeding mothers continuing to breastfed at least 6 weeks compared to 70% of breastfeeding mothers continuing to breastfed at least six weeks discharged from hospitals with none of the Baby Friendly steps.

In Kentucky, too many newborns die in the first year of life or have to be re-admitted from problems that are potentially preventable. These include unsafe sleep practices, abusive head trauma, improper use of car seats, excessive jaundice, dehydration, smoking, etc. The identified infant safety steps are ways birthing hospitals can impact these adverse outcomes through implementing evidence-based practices and national guidelines.

| KY Safety Goal 1: Reduce Infant Mortality<br>(choose at least one)   | KY Successful Breastfeeding Goal 2: Increase Breastfeeding Rates<br>(choose at least two)  |
|--|--|
| 1.1 Instruct parents and caregivers on Infant Safe Sleep practices based on current American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.   | 2.1 Train all healthcare staff on breastfeeding support.   |
| 1.2 Model Infant Safe Sleep practices in the newborn nursery and NICU, based on current American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations.                                    | 2.2 Inform all pregnant women about breastfeeding.   |
| 1.3 Follow the evidence-based practice for educating all parents and caregivers of newborns on prevention of Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) prior to discharge.                 | 2.3 Place babies in skin-to-skin contact (Kangaroo Care) immediately after birth.  |
| 1.4 Establish a system to prevent readmissions of breastfeeding and high risk newborns, including, at a minimum, those with jaundice, prematurity, or neonatal abstinence. | 2.4 Establish a system to ensure that breastfeeding infants will have follow-up with Physicians and referrals to breastfeeding support groups. |
| 1.5 Assist birth mother in writing down an infant safety plan to have available in case of a future emergency situation.   | 2.5 Show mothers how to breastfeed.  |
| 1.6 Establish policies to follow AAP guidelines for screening and follow-up of jaundice  | 2.6 Give no food or drink to breastfeeding infants and purchase formula at fair market value.  |
| 1.7 Document counseling mothers and families on avoidance of exposure to second hand smoke and refer to smoking cessation services   | 2.7 Practice rooming in.   |
| 1.8 Educate all parents regarding the signs of postpartum depression and where to seek help if signs appear.   | 2.8 Encourage breastfeeding on demand.   |
| 1.9 Establish a “hard stop” policy to prevent early (<39 weeks) elective deliveries without medical indications at your facility.  | 2.9 Give no pacifier or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.   |
| 1.10 Instruct parents/caregivers on the law and appropriate use of infant car seats, and verify its installation in the back seat of the vehicle at discharge.             | 2.10 Have a written breastfeeding policy.  |

The KY Infants Safe and Strong Hospital Recognition Program is sponsored jointly by



**APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Hospitals can seek STARS recognition by completing the application for each set of two successful breastfeeding steps and one infant safety step that they have implemented. STARS will be awarded quarterly and will be valid for 5 years after the award has been received. At the end of the 5 years, hospitals will need to re-apply for continued recognition. These STARS steps are based on the current national standards as of January 1, 2014 and may be updated as standards change. STARS awarded hospitals may be monitored to verify that policies and procedures are followed to meet the STARS award. If at any time, there is significant evidence that the steps are not being followed, STARS can be revoked.

**How to Apply**

1. Read through the Guidance Document first then begin filling out your Intent to Apply. The Intent to Apply allows hospital to receive technical assistance on those steps they are working to implement.
2. Hospitals can apply for multiple STARS with each submission.
3. Once the hospital submits the Intent to Apply, KISS program staff will contact you to offer technical assistance.
4. Hospitals should review the Guidance Document. The Guidance Document provides additional information and resources, sample policies and possible trainings for each step. The Guidance Document will provide hospitals with the necessary criteria that will need to be submitted with the Application. The Guidance Document also provides hospitals with a checklist of necessary items that must be submitted with the application.
5. Once the hospital has implemented their steps, they will submit the Application and necessary documents to the KISS STARS program by the deadlines listed below.

| Application Due         | KISS Awards Review Committee Meeting | Notification of STARS Awards |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| July 1 <sup>st</sup>    | July 15 <sup>th</sup>                | July 31 <sup>st</sup>        |
| October 1 <sup>st</sup> | October 15 <sup>th</sup>             | October 31 <sup>st</sup>     |
| January 1 <sup>st</sup> | January 15 <sup>th</sup>             | January 31 <sup>st</sup>     |
| April 1 <sup>st</sup>   | April 15 <sup>th</sup>               | April 31 <sup>st</sup>       |

**Submitting your Intent to Apply and Application:**

Send all completed forms and attachments to:

**By Mail**

KISS STARS Program  
275 East Main Street  
HS2W-D  
Frankfort, KY 40621

**Email**

[KISS.Program@ky.gov](mailto:KISS.Program@ky.gov)

**Fax**

(502) 564-4217  
Include a fax cover page with the total number of pages clearly listed.

**NEXT STEPS**

Each hospital that applies will be notified by the dates listed above. If the application meets qualifications as determined by the KISS Program review team, the hospital will receive:

1. An award letter;
2. A KISS STARS Certificate to be displayed in the perinatal care area; and
3. A template for a press release for local media.

The Department for Public Health will issue a press release to acknowledge the accomplishment by the hospital. Hospitals who have achieved one or more STARS will be recognized publically at the March of Dimes Prematurity Summit, Annual Breastfeeding Summit and the Kentucky Perinatal Association Annual Meeting.