

A service idea for Young Children: Priority One

Handle with care

THE TRAGEDY

John would never have struck his baby. Even that night when she started crying at 1 o'clock in the morning and was still wailing at 3:30 a.m., he didn't want to hurt her. He just wanted her to quiet down. In his frustration, he shook her. And she did quiet down. When she started to cry once more, he shook her again, and she dropped off to sleep. But she never woke up.

John, like many parents, relatives and babysitters, didn't realize just how fragile an infant is. His child became a victim of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Shaking happens across cultures. It is estimated that 21 to 74 cases occur per 100,000 children less than 1 year old worldwide. Some children die, while others are permanently disabled by blindness, paralysis, seizures or mental problems. Broken bones and dislocations are also possible.

Shaking a baby vigorously for any reason can cause brain damage. The shaking may reflect the caregiver's frustration or may be intended to emphasize a disciplinary measure.



Shaken Baby Syndrome

SERVICE BULLETIN

NEVER SHAKE A BABY

5 steps to prevention

Education is key to protecting babies from this type of brain injury. All parents and caregivers should know and follow these five steps.

- 1** Never shake a child—especially babies under the age of 2.
- 2** Always provide support for an infant's head.
- 3** Know what to do if a baby won't stop crying. (See "Never shake a baby" brochure.)
- 4** Make sure other caregivers know these precautions.
- 5** Immediately take a baby who has been shaken to the emergency room.



THE PHYSIOLOGY

Young children can be injured through these actions because they differ physically from older children and adults. A young child's head is larger in proportion to his body, and the neck muscles are relatively weak. The brain has not yet fully developed its outer protective layer, so it can be injured more easily. And the space between the brain and skull is larger, so the brain can travel farther, gaining more speed before impact with the skull.

Shaking a baby causes a whiplash effect. The brain strikes the inside of the skull as the baby's head rapidly moves back and forth. The brain starts bleeding, causing pressure that damages the tissue. The result can be permanent brain damage.



GLOBAL HOPE

Around the world—from the Serengeti plains to the streets of Dehli to the Siberian tundra—child abuse takes many different forms: child labor and mutilations, discrimination against girls' schooling, child trafficking and worse.

To learn more about these issues at a global level, and to find resources for your club's efforts, Kiwanis International recommends consulting UNICEF.

Log on to www.unicef.org/protection to find resources in English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Chinese.

LOCAL IMPACT

Your project will have the greatest impact at the local level. A Web search will help you locate reputable child abuse prevention agencies active within your own community or in the place where you hope to help children.

THE ROLE OF KIWANIS

Kiwanis clubs can help prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome by educating parents and other caregivers. Simple, direct education efforts can greatly reduce the number of uninformed caregivers.

Educational information can be distributed through brochures, parenting cards, print ads, Web sites and radio or television messages.

Sharing the message

Plan to address Shaken Baby Syndrome by seeking out partners for an education effort: the local hospital, a prominent pediatrician, the health department and/or committee for prevention of child abuse. This spokesperson lends credibility to the "Never shake a baby" message, giving the audience an expert to associate with the advice shared.

Once your club has identified the doctor, government official or child abuse expert who will act as the spokesperson, outline the campaign. The objective is to communicate the basic "Never shake a baby" message to everyone in the community and to provide more comprehensive information about Shaken Baby Syndrome and how to cope with a crying baby to parents and other care providers. Look for health care clinics or fairs in your area in which your cause might be represented. Because it is vital to get this message to parents as early as possible in the life of the child, Jacy Showers, Ed.D., an expert on this problem, recommends working with a hospital so that parents leave the hospital knowing the dangers of shaking their baby.

Radio public service announcements

Take copies of this script to your local radio stations. Ask them to read any version of these public service announcements to promote the dangers of shaking babies.

Never shake your baby!

30 seconds

Every year young children are paralyzed, blinded or killed because people don't understand how dangerous it is to shake a baby. Infants have large, heavy heads, weak neck muscles and very fragile brains. Shaking that wouldn't bother an older child can kill a younger one. So please, no matter the situation, ***never shake your baby!***

This message brought to you by (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.

15 seconds

Parents of young children, please remember: An infant's head is very large, and his neck muscles are weak. Repeated or violent shaking can cause brain damage.

So, ***never shake your baby!*** A message from (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.

10 seconds

Don't do something that could blind, paralyze or even kill your baby. ***Never shake your baby.***

A message from (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.

When the baby keeps crying

30 seconds

It happens to every parent: The baby starts crying, and you do all the right things: you change her diaper, burp her, walk with her, feed her, rock her ... but nothing works. She keeps crying.

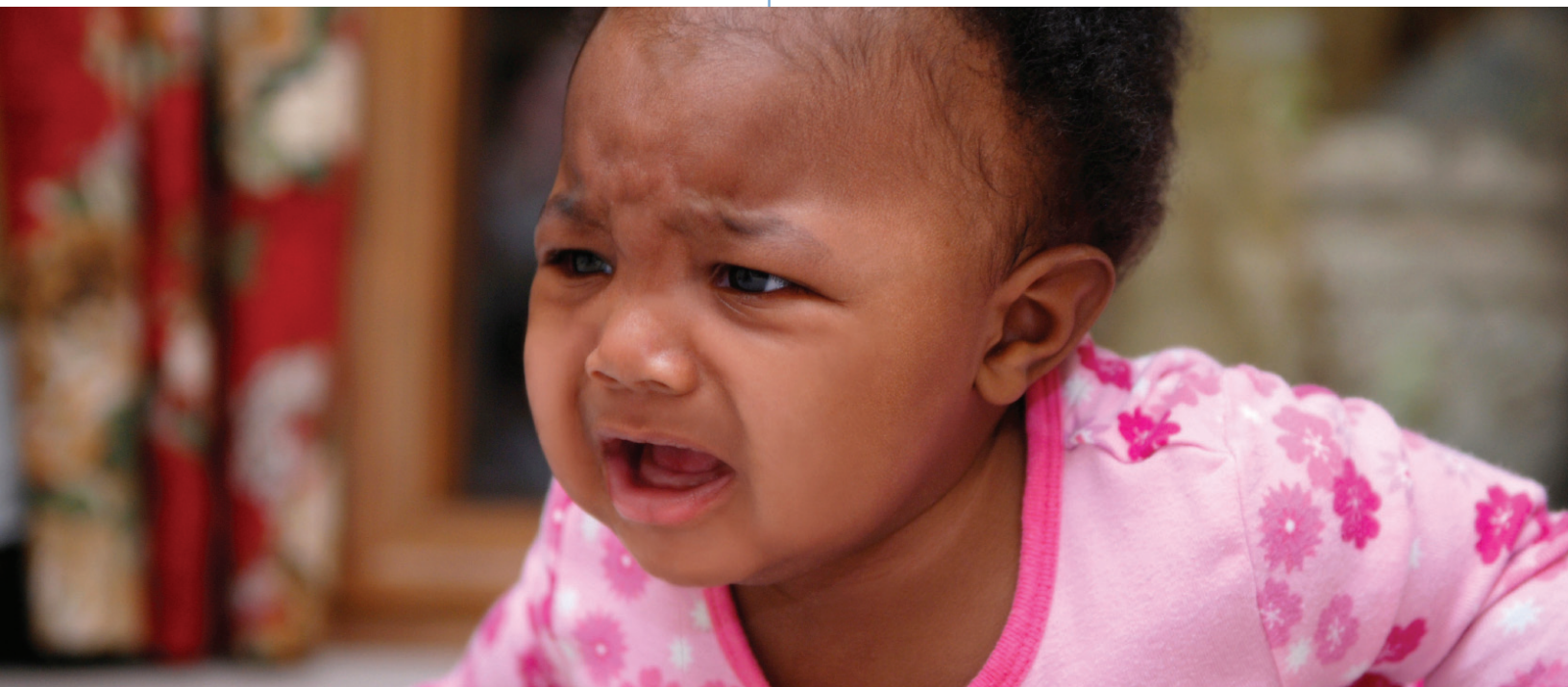
The longer your baby cries, the louder it seems, and the more upset you become, until you feel like you're going to explode. Protect your baby and yourself. Have a friend take over. Or put the baby in her crib and go to another room. A message from (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.

15 seconds

The baby keeps crying, no matter what you do. And the crying starts driving you crazy. The baby's in hysterics, and you're headed there, too. Move away before *you* pop. Call a friend to take over. Or put your baby in his crib. A message from (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.

10 seconds

When the baby won't stop crying, don't let it get to you. Call a friend. Or put your baby in his crib. A message from (radio station) and the Kiwanis Club of _____.



RESOURCES

Many organizations, including the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa, have produced educational videos and resource materials to help your club spread the word on preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome. Sample radio scripts for public service announcements are on page 4. A brochure, ready for reproduction and distribution, is available from Kiwanis International.

Reach out to some of these other organizations for possible partnerships and to share existing materials.

Kiwanis Club of Ottawa

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Ottawa, Ontario K1B 3W7
Canada
613-233-1900
Fax: 613-233-3718
E-mail: office@ottawakiwanis.org
www.ottawakiwanis.org

*Educational video produced
by this club is available at
www.nevershakeababy.org.*

The Shaken Baby Alliance

4516 Boat Club Rd.
Suite 114
Ft. Worth, TX 76135
877-6-END-SBS
(877-636-3727)
E-mail: info@shakenbaby.com
www.shakenbaby.com

*Brochures, posters, window stickers,
audio/visual presentation materials*

National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome

2955 Harrison Blvd.
Suite 102
Ogden, UT 84403
801-627-3399
888-273-0071
Fax: 801-627-3321
E-mail: mail@dontshake.org
www.dontshake.org

Videos, brochures, handouts, posters

SBS Prevention Plus

PO Box 205
Groveport, OH 43125
800-858-5222
Fax: 614-836-8359
E-mail: sbsp@aol.com
www.sbsplus.com

*Videos, posters, packets of materials
for new parents, public service
announcements, bumper stickers,
pencils, T-shirts. Many materials
available in both English and Spanish.*

American Academy of Pediatrics

National Headquarters
141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-434-4000
Fax: 847-434-8000
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org
www.aap.org

Washington DC Office Department of Federal Affairs

601-13th St. NW
Suite 400 North
Washington DC 20005
202-347-8600
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The Epilepsy Association of Central Florida

866-864-1416, ext. 102
E-mail:
education@epilepsyassociation.org
www.aboutshakenbaby.com
Video



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