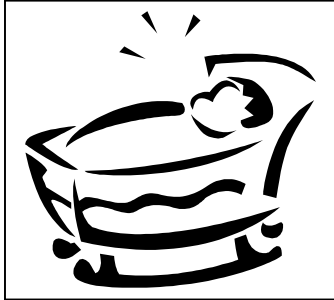


## A Service Project for Young Children: Priority One PO #11



# Shaken Baby Syndrome

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### The Problem

John would never have struck his baby. Even that night when she started crying at 1:00 in the morning and was still wailing at 3:30, 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 baby-sitters, didn't realize just how fragile an infant is. His child became a victim of "Shaken Baby Syndrome," or SBS, which affects more than 50,000 young children in the United States each year. Some children die, while others are permanently handicapped with

blindness, paralysis, seizures, or mental retardation. 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. However, Shaken Baby Syndrome may also result from play activities, such as repeatedly tossing an infant up in the air, vigorous bouncing on the knee, spinning a child, or carrying a child while jogging.

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 is covered with less myelin (the fatty substance that encases nerve fibers), and there is more space between the brain and the skull. Thus, shaking a young child moves a less protected brain through a larger space, causing a greater impact. The result is bleeding in the brain, which can cause damaging pressure.

### The Solution

Kiwanis clubs can help prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome by educating parents and other caregivers. Between one quarter and one half of the American public doesn't

know that shaking an infant can cause brain damage or death. Simple, direct education efforts can greatly reduce the number of uninformed care givers.

There are seven points that need to be communicated:

- Never shake a child who is under the age of two.
- Always provide support for an infant's head.
- Avoid games and activities that cause unnecessary back-and-forth movements of a baby's head.
- Protect toddlers from repetitive or severe falls as they learn to walk.
- Know what to do if a baby won't stop crying.
- Make sure other care givers know these precautions.
- Immediately take a baby who has been shaken to the emergency room.

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

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## Club Activities

A club planning to address Shaken Baby Syndrome should start by seeking out partners for an education effort: the local hospital, prominent pediatrician, health department, and/or committee for prevention of child abuse. The club has the ability to get the "Don't Shake Babies" message out to the community, but it needs at least one of these partners to ensure the credibility of the message.

Furthermore, it is vital to get this message to parents as early as possible in the life of the child. Jacey Showers, Ph.D., and expert on this problem, recommends working with a hospital so that parents leave the hospital knowing the dangers of shaking their baby.

Once the club has identified the doctor, government official, or child abuse expert who will act as the spokesperson, the campaign can be planned. The objective is to communicate the basic "Don't Shake Babies" message to everyone in the community and to provide more comprehensive information about SBS and how to cope with a crying baby to parents and other care providers.

The materials clubs can use in this effort include a large number of items. A brochure, ready for reproduction, is included on pages ? and ? of this service bulletin and sample radio scripts appear on page ?. Described below are materials available from the City-County Health Department of Pueblo, Colorado. An order form for these materials appears on page ?. If a club works with a hospital, it may want to discuss setting up a complete project with follow-up cards and tracking through a computer program. Information on such a program is available from the Pueblo Distribution Center, 649 Main Street, Suite B, Groveport, OH 43125 ; or call: 614/836-8360. Information is also available from the Special Projects Branch of the Pueblo Health Department, 56 Club Manor Drive, Suite 100, Pueblo, Colorado 81008; phone; 719/583-2000

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## Available Materials

The following organizations have educational materials on Shaken Baby Syndrome that range from handouts to posters to videos. Please contact one or all

of these organizations for additional information.

**Kiwanis Club of Ottawa**  
63 Sparks Street  
Suite 601  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5A6  
CANADA  
Phone: 613/233-1900  
Fax: 613/233-3718  
E-mail:  
office@ottawakiwanis.org  
Web:  
www.ottawakiwanis.org/  
kco.nsf

*Precious Minds  
Educational Video –  
info@preciousminds.org*

*Shaken Baby Syndrome  
Educational Video –  
www.nevershakeababy.  
org  
/shakenbaby/index.htm*

**National Center on  
Shaken Baby Syndrome**  
2955 Harrison Blvd., #102  
Ogden, UT 84403  
Phone: 801/627-3399  
Fax: 801/627-3321  
Toll Free: 888/273-0071  
E-mail:  
mail@dontshake.com  
Web:  
www.dontshake.com

*Videos, brochures,  
handouts, posters*

**The Shaken Baby  
Alliance**  
1201 W Lancaster  
Ft. Worth, TX 76102  
Phone: 877-6-END-SBS  
(877/636-3727)  
E-mail:  
info@shakenbaby.com

-OR-

**The Shaken Baby  
Alliance**  
PO Box 230293  
Centreville, VA 20120  
Phone: 703/802-8751  
E-mail:  
aadelmann@shakenbaby.  
com  
Web:  
www.shakenbaby.com

*Books, tapes, shirts,  
brochures, posters,  
window stickers,  
presentations, audio/visual  
prevention materials*

**Shaken Baby Syndrome  
Prevention Plus**  
PO Box 205  
649 Main Street, Ste. B  
Groveport, OH 43125  
Phone: 614/836-8360  
800/858-5222  
Fax: 614/836-8359  
E-mail: sbspp@aol.com  
Web: www.sbsplus.com

*Videos, posters, packet of  
materials for new parents,  
public service  
announcements, bumper  
stickers, pencils, t-shirts.  
Most materials come in  
come in both English and  
Spanish.*

**American Academy of  
Pediatrics**  
141 NW Point Blvd.  
Elk Grove, IL 60007  
Phone: 847/434-4000  
Fax: 847/434-8000  
E-mail: csc@aap.org

kidsdocs@aap.org  
Web: www.aap.org

*Information, book, videos,  
brochures*

**National Center on  
Shaken Baby Syndrome**  
2955 Harrison Blvd. #102  
Ogden, UT 84403  
Phone: 801/627-3399  
Toll Free: 888/273-0071  
Fax: 801/627-3321  
Web:  
www.medina.com/shaken\_  
baby\_syndrome.htm

**The Epilepsy  
Association of Central  
Florida**  
Phone: 1-866/864-1412  
E-mail: education@  
epilepsyassociation.org  
Web:  
www.aboutshakenbaby.  
com

*Video*

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## Radio Public Service Announcements

Type (double-spaced) copies of these radio scripts and take them to your local radio stations. Ask them to read any of the public service announcements to promote the dangers of shaking babies.

### ***Don't 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, . . . or toss one in the air, . . . or bounce one on a knee. 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, ***don't shake your baby!***

This message brought to you by radio station \_\_\_\_\_ and the Kiwanis Club of \_\_\_\_\_.

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*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 or bouncing can cause brain damage. So, ***don't shake your baby!***

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

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*10 Seconds*

Don't do something that could blind, paralyze, or even kill your baby. ***Don't 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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*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 \_\_\_\_\_.

## Instructions for handout.

The page to the right is a brochure, ready to be printed. To use this master, remove the staples in the gutter between the pages, cut along the fold, and then have the brochure printed, double-sided. Have the printed brochures folded like business letters (#10 letter fold), with the panel that reads **Don't Shake a Baby** as the cover.

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## When the Baby Cries

When your baby cries, remember that this is the way he or she communicates with you. Please be patient and see what your baby needs. Try the following:

- ☐ Pick up the baby and comfort her.
- ☐ Check the baby's diaper and change it if wet or soiled.
- ☐ See if the baby is too hot or too cold.
- ☐ Burp the baby.
- ☐ Feed the baby slowly and burp the baby often.
- ☐ Offer the baby a pacifier.
- ☐ Take the baby to a quiet room.
- ☐ Hold the baby against your chest and walk or rock him.
- ☐ Take the baby for a ride or put her in a baby swing.

If the crying wears you out or upsets you, separate yourself from the baby for a while. Put the baby in her crib, leave the room, and shut the door. If possible, ask someone else to take over comforting the baby. Then, call someone to talk to or do something you find relaxing.



*Distributed by your local Kiwanis club as part of the  
Kiwaniis International service program  
Young Children: Priority One.*

Kiwanis International  
3636 Woodview Trace  
Indianapolis, IN 46268-3196

(317) 875-8755 Worldwide  
(800) 549-2647 United States & Canada  
(317) 879-0204 FAX  
email: [service@kiwanis.org](mailto:service@kiwanis.org)  
web: [www.kiwanis.org](http://www.kiwanis.org)

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# Don't Shake A Baby!

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Shaking a  
baby can  
cause severe  
injury  
or  
death!



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## The Dangers

Please don't shake your infant. Shaking a young child can cause brain damage or spinal injuries that result in:

- ☐ Death
- ☐ Blindness
- ☐ Mental Retardation
- ☐ Seizures
- ☐ Learning Disabilities
- ☐ Cerebral Palsy
- ☐ Paralysis

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## The Don'ts

People who shake their infants don't mean to hurt them. Some shake their children to interrupt what seems like endless crying.

Others are playing with their children. So, play it safe and remember the Don'ts:

- ☐ Don't shake a baby.

- ☐ Don't toss a small child in the air.
- ☐ Don't bounce a baby on your knee or swing him on your foot.
- ☐ Don't spin a child around.
- ☐ Don't "crack the whip" while swinging a child by the ankles.

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## The Always Do's

- ☐ Support your baby's head while holding, playing with, or transporting her.
- ☐ Hold and cuddle the baby to show you love him or her.
- ☐ Make sure anyone who handles your baby knows the dangers of shaking.
- ☐ If you suspect the baby has been injured through a fall, playing, or accidental shaking, go to a doctor immediately.
- ☐ Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying.

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## Why Babies Get Injured by Shaking

Shaking a young child has a different effect than it does with an adult, or even a ten-year-old. This is because a young child has a large, heavy head, weak neck muscles, and a brain that is still developing.

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 which damages the tissue. The result can be permanent brain damage.

In other cases, shaking has damaged the spine or caused broken bones or dislocations.





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