

# Shaken Baby Syndrome

## Never Shake A Baby – Tips for Parents and Caregivers

Approximately 1,200 to 1,400 children are injured or killed by shaking a baby every year in the United States.\* Most of these people could never imagine harming their baby– it was an instantaneous reaction to frustration! Caregivers must be educated about Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS).

- Although it may happen out of frustration, shaking a baby vigorously is a serious form of child abuse.
- A single shaking episode can result in death or other severe injuries such as mental retardation, speech and learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, seizure disorder, hearing loss, partial or total blindness, behavior disorders, cognitive impairment, spinal cord injury, paralysis, broken bones and dislocations.
- Caring for a baby can be difficult and frustrating. Babies cry for many reasons including:
  - Hunger
  - Need to be burped
  - Need diaper change
  - Too hot
  - Too cold
  - Fever or pain from earache, teething, rash, or insect bite
  - Need to be held or soothed
  - Overtired
  - Over stimulated
  - Sometimes babies just need to cry!
- **If you are frustrated, gently place baby in their crib and go to another room for a few minutes until you calm down.** Take several deep breaths, count to 100, listen to soft music, exercise, do household chores, or go for a walk (do not leave baby home alone).
- Caregivers must be educated about Shaken Baby Syndrome. Make sure they understand the dangers of shaking a baby, Provide them with an alternate caregiver number who can help. Also available is the Child Help USA Hotline 1-800-4-A-CHILD. Caregivers can speak to a counselor during stressful times through this free, confidential hotline.
- Reassure your caregiver and make them feel comfortable that it is OK to call you at work if baby is inconsolable.

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\*References: National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome

