



**Babies are fragile. Please don't shake a child.
National Shaken Baby Syndrome Campaign**

The National Exchange Club Foundation is dedicated to educating the public on the dangers of shaking a baby. The Foundation has implemented a national campaign by distributing literature to parents, new parents, grandparents, caregivers, baby sitters, teenagers, siblings and licensed childcare providers throughout hundreds of communities. The campaign, which began in September 1998 in conjunction with Baby Safety Month, has resulted in the distribution of 1.5 million brochures, billboards, magnets and t-shirts. Shaken Baby Syndrome Brochures are also available in Spanish. The campaign has increased awareness nationwide, and will be conducted year-round. For more information, contact the Foundation office at 800.924.2643.

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

When a baby is vigorously shaken, the head moves back and forth. This sudden whiplash motion can cause bleeding inside the head and increased pressure on the brain, causing the brain to pull apart and resulting in injury to the baby. This is known as Shaken Baby Syndrome, and is one of the leading forms of fatal child abuse. A baby's head and neck are susceptible to head trauma because his or her muscles are not fully developed and the brain tissue is exceptionally fragile. Head trauma is the leading cause of disability among abused infants and children.

Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs most frequently in infants younger than six months old, yet can occur up to the age of three. Often there are no obvious outward signs if inside injury, particularly in the head or behind the eyes. In reality, shaking a baby, if only for a few seconds, can injure the baby for life. These injuries can include brain swelling and damage; cerebral palsy; mental retardation; developmental delays; blindness; hearing loss; paralysis and death. When a child is shaken in anger and frustration, the force is multiplied five or ten times more than it would be if the child had simply tripped and fallen.

How does it happen?

Often frustrated parents or other persons responsible for a child's care feel that shaking a baby is a harmless way to make a child stop crying. The number one reason a baby is shaken is because of inconsolable crying. Almost 25 percent of all babies with Shaken Baby Syndrome die. It is

estimated that 25-50 percent of parents and caretakers aren't aware of the effects of shaking a baby.

What can you do to prevent a tragedy?

If you or someone else shakes a baby, either accidentally or on purpose, call 911 or take the child to the emergency room immediately. Bleeding inside the brain can be treated. Immediate medical attention will save your baby many future problems . . . and possibly the baby's life.

Other Suggestions for Parents			
Never throw or shake a baby	Always provide support for the baby's head and neck	Place the baby in a crib, leave the room for a few minutes	Sit down, close your eyes and count to 20
Take the baby for a stroller ride	Play music, or sing to the baby	Ask a friend to "take over" for a while	Don't pick the baby up until you feel calm
Make sure the baby is fed, burped and dry	Gently rock or walk the baby	Check for discomfort of diaper rash, teething or fever	Call the doctor if you think the baby is sick
Make sure clothing is not too tight	Give the baby a pacifier	Offer a noisy toy or rattle	Hug and cuddle the baby gently