



Prevent Child AbuseIndiana

If you would like information about preventing child abuse, contact:

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana

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Wait a Minute!

**How to handle crying and
prevent Shaken Infant Syndrome**

Shaken Infant Syndrome happens when a person caring for a baby or young child becomes frustrated and shakes the baby forcefully. Even mild shaking can cause serious injury. Usually the damage that occurs cannot be seen. Severe injury is most common in very young children, but even four- and five-year-old children can be injured or killed.

Of all the children who are shaken, approximately:

1/3 die

1/3 are severely injured

1/3 recover, with health, development, or learning problems in the future

Shaken Infant Syndrome can cause:

Death

Dislocated joints

Brain damage

Blindness or other eye trauma

Spinal injury or paralysis

Mental retardation

Seizures

Delay in normal development

Broken bones

Studies show that babies are shaken when a caregiver becomes frustrated by the baby's crying. Here are some ideas on how to handle frustration with a crying baby.

To calm the baby:

See if the baby is hungry or needs a diaper change

See if the baby is ill—call the doctor if necessary

Take the baby for a walk in a stroller or a ride in a car

Walk with the baby held upright against your shoulder

Help the baby suck a pacifier or thumb

Gently rock the baby in your arms

Talk softly or sing to the baby

Play soothing music

Wrap your baby in a blanket, or place in a cloth carrier,
so the baby is close to your chest—this closeness
can be very comforting to babies

If the child won't stop crying and you feel yourself getting angry or tense, it's okay to put the baby in a safe place for a short period of time. Make sure you're nearby in case there is an emergency.

To calm yourself:

Wait a minute, then another, until you feel in control

Take a deep breath and count to 20 as many times as you need to

Listen to music

Watch television

Take a shower

Exercise

If you still feel out of control, call a friend, relative, or your doctor and ask for help.

Other things you can do to prevent Shaken Infant Syndrome:

- Talk to anyone who cares for your children to make sure they understand the dangers of Shaken Infant Syndrome
- Help ease the frustration of parents with young children by discussing the normal development of children
- Share this brochure with older children you know who baby-sit young children
- Look for opportunities to help relatives, friends, and neighbors who have young children—every parent needs a break occasionally

If you or someone else shakes a child, immediately take the child to the nearest emergency room. Bleeding inside the brain can be treated, but only if you tell the doctors the child has been shaken. Once the damage is done, waiting only causes further damage. Emergency medical treatment may save your child many problems in the future, and possibly save your child's life.

If you need more information about this or other parenting concerns, please call the Care Line at 1.800.CHILDREN (1.800.244.5373) Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Also visit our website, www.pcain.org, for more parenting information.