

DON'T SHAKE A BABY!

All too often we read or hear about a baby, or young children, who are permanently disabled or killed by parents and care-givers who don't understand the fragility of a young child's brain. By shaking a child an adult can cause death or permanent brain damage.

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. The space between the brain and the 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 begins to bleed, causing pressure which damages the tissue. The result can be death, blindness, mental retardation, seizures, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy and paralysis.

THE DON'TS

Most people who shake their infants don't mean to hurt them. Some shake the child to interrupt what seems like endless crying. Others are playing with the child. 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*** swing the child by the ankles.

WHAT YOUR CLUB CAN DO

The first thing to do is to send for Service Bulletin PO#11 from the Program Development Department of Kiwanis International. This bulletin contains a brochure ready to be reproduced that can be distributed to doctor's offices, hospitals, child-care centers, day care providers, etc. It also contains scripts for public service announcements and other shaken baby syndrome materials that are available for purchase.

If you can save one child's life through the outreach of your club you will be rewarded and your club will truly be that organization of volunteers dedicated to saving the world ONE CHILD and one community at a time.

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