

Preventing **Shaken** Baby Syndrome

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- *Never shake a baby* for any reason!
- If a baby appears to have stopped breathing, call 911 or an ambulance or police. *Shaking will not restore breathing but it may injure the child.* CPR must be given when a child (or adult) stops breathing. Courses on CPR are available in most communities.
- If a baby's crying, refusal to eat or resistance to a diaper change is frustrating you, *ask someone reliable to quickly take over for you.* If you can't find someone on the spur of the moment, make sure that nothing obvious is wrong with the baby, *put the child in a safe place such as a crib, and walk away from the room for a while — you need a break.*
- Before a baby's crying pushes you too far, check out the possibility that the crying is a sign of a particular problem like hunger, being hot or cold, a fever, needing a diaper change, or being pinched by someone.
- If you worry that you might hurt your baby, speak to a professional. Call your doctor, public or community health nurse, midwife, a qualified counsellor, a children's services provider, or a community crisis line.
- If your baby cries a lot, it may be due to a condition called "colic". Consult your doctor, and organize a plan for coping with your child's demands. Set up a team of reliable family, friends or neighbours who are willing to give you regular babysitting relief or come quickly if you call. If you don't have reliable help available, or don't want to ask for it, ask a professional for advice.
- Caring for a baby is demanding. Every parent and caregiver needs relief: adequate sleep, a change of scene and activity, and to be able to share thoughts and feelings. Make sure that you are getting support from someone you can rely on.
- Know your caregiver. Never leave a baby with someone you don't trust or whose references you haven't checked. Never leave a child with someone known to have violent reactions.

Never shake a baby for any reason!