



Protect And Comfort Infants

Shaken Baby Syndrome – Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT) is a form of child abuse that includes a combination of brain injuries that result from violent shaking, with or without battering or other physical impact. Nationally, it is estimated that as many as 1,400 cases occur each year resulting in approximately 600 infant fatalities due to violent shaking. The overall outcome of children identified with shaken baby injury is poor: over 2/3 die or suffer a permanent disability. The medical costs associated with the initial and long-term care for these children are substantial, with estimates ranging from \$300,000 to over \$1,000,000 for the first five years of care for a severely injured baby. During 2015, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center reported 23 cases, including three fatalities.

In 1991, COCA received funding to implement a “Don’t Shake the Baby” prevention program. This initiative provided educational information to target audiences about the normalcy of crying and the dangers of shaking babies, and offered practical suggestions about how to care for and nurture infants. COCA began collaborating with the Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children in 2004, expanded our efforts and renamed the program, **Protect And Comfort Infants (PACI)**.

Since the program’s inception, over 400,000 informational packets were distributed to parents of newborns in area hospitals. Over 300 special presentations have been provided to approximately 2,500 pregnant and parenting teens through high school programs. COCA staff and PACI Hospital Volunteers also provided information and support through face-to-face contact with almost 2,000 mothers of newborns each year on the maternity floors of Good Samaritan Hospital and Bethesda North Hospital. In an effort to increase public awareness, COCA developed a public service announcement, posters and billboard ads targeted to appeal to the male population, since approximately 70% of the perpetrators of shaken babies are male.

COCA helped introduce Ohio Senate Bill 144, which was unanimously approved and enacted as “Claire’s Law” on February 29, 2008. The law mandates education and recording of all SBS/AHT cases in the statewide-automated child welfare information system.

In late 2015, a new PACI program was implemented in collaboration with the Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children. It includes a focus on high risk caregivers served at area medical clinics. Primary care providers now give the educational baby board book *Calm Baby Gently*, by Dr. John Hutton, as a gift to caregivers at their baby’s one month well-child visit, prompting discussion regarding infant crying and the dangers of shaking. This initiative also encourages reading aloud to children starting at birth to strengthen language skills, literacy skills and parent-child bonding.

The new affiliation with Talbert House provides access to a full continuum of youth and family related services.

For more information, contact Council on Child Abuse at (513) 684-7976.

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