

DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# Training Module 6

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Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head  
Trauma

Rev. 8/2016

## Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

### What is Physical Abuse?

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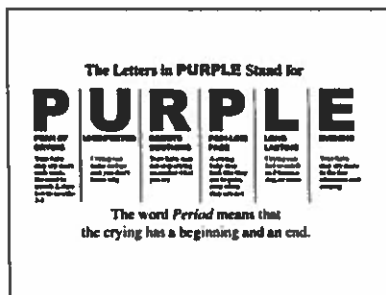
One type of physical abuse is called **Shaken Baby Syndrome** or abusive head trauma. It is caused by the violent shaking of a baby or young child, causing the head to flop back and forth. This whiplash motion can slam the brain against the inside of the skull and tear blood vessels. Brain swelling and internal bleeding from injury cause the brain tissue to tear.

The young child's brain is forming nerve pathways that are important for learning and normal development. Shaken baby syndrome can cause severe damage to these pathways that can never be repaired. Babies under the age of six months are at the highest risk of Shaken Baby Syndrome, but it can affect children up to the age of three. 75% of babies shaken live with lifelong disabilities and 25% result in death.

***Frustration from nonstop crying is the number one reason a baby is shaken.***

The Period of PURPLE Crying is an infant abuse prevention program. This program teaches parents and caregivers about normal infant crying and the dangers of shaking an infant. The Period of PURPLE Crying describes a time in a baby's life that begins around 2 weeks of age and continues until 3-4 months of age. The acronym PURPLE is used to describe specific characteristics of a baby's crying during this phase. Parents and caregivers learn that the crying is normal. Although frustrating, this crying is a normal phase in the child's development that will pass. Some babies can cry a lot and some far less, but they all go through it.

The word *period* is important because it tells parents that it is only TEMPORARY and will come to an end.



For more information or if you are interested in the PURPLE online training module, please visit [www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)

### What is Neglect?

Children have basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision. If these needs are not met, it may be a sign of neglect. Neglect also includes the failure or refusal

to prevent abuse when it is known a child has been abused.

**Here are some of the signs you may see if a child has been neglected.**

- Constant hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Constant fatigue, listlessness
- Poor school attendance
- Health problems or lack of medical or dental care



## Chapter 3: Health Promotion and Protection

### 3.4 Health Protection in Child Care

#### 3.4.4 Child Abuse and Neglect

##### Standard 3.4.4.3: Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive

##### Head Trauma

All child care facilities should have a policy and procedure to identify and prevent shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma. All caregivers/teachers who are in direct contact with children including substitute caregivers/teachers and volunteers, should receive training on preventing shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma, recognition of potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma, strategies for coping with a crying, fussing or distraught child, and the development and vulnerabilities of the brain in infancy and early childhood.

##### **RATIONALE:**

Over the past several years there has been increasing recognition of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma which is the occurrence of brain injury in young children under three years of age due to shaking a child. Even mild shaking can result in serious, permanent brain damage or death. The brain of the young child may bounce inside of the skull resulting in brain damage, hemorrhaging, blindness, or other serious injuries or death. There have been several reported incidents occurring in child care (1). Caregivers/teachers experience young children who may be fussy or constantly crying. It is important for caregivers/teachers to be educated about the risks of shaking and provided with strategies to cope if they are frustrated (3). Many states have passed legislation requiring education and training for caregivers/teachers. Caregivers/teachers should check their individual state's specific requirements (2). Staff can also recognize the signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma in children in their care.

##### **COMMENTS:**

For more information and resources on shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma, contact the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome at <http://www.dontshake.org>.

##### **TYPE OF FACILITY:**

Small Family Child Care Home, Center, Large Family Child Care Home

##### **RELATED STANDARDS:**

**3.4.4.1** Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

##### **REFERENCES:**

1. American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect. 2009. Abusive head trauma in infants and children. *Pediatrics* 123:1409-11.
2. National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. State licensing database. <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.
3. Calm a Crying Baby. Shaken baby syndrome prevention. <http://www.calmacryingbaby.com>.