

# Shaken Baby Syndrome

**Never shake a baby!**

**Shaking a baby can cause blindness, permanent brain damage, even death.**

Shaken Baby Syndrome is a term used to describe brain injury in young children under three years of age (most commonly under 18 months) resulting from vigorous shaking of an infant or child by the arms, legs, or shoulders. This motion often results in bleeding inside the head and can cause irreversible brain damage, blindness, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, spinal cord injuries, seizures, learning disabilities, and even death. It can be traced historically from the mid-1500's and was officially named and defined in 1974.

**Shaken Baby Syndrome is considered to be a form of child abuse.** If you believe that your child has been subjected to any abuse, please report it by calling 1-800-252-5400 if you live in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, or New Mexico. Other states may use 1-512-834-3784 to report abuse or neglect that has occurred in Texas.

**Presenting symptoms** can be vomiting with lethargy or drowsiness, respiratory difficulties, coma or death. Usually reported is that the infant stopped breathing, went to sleep and could not be aroused, was dropped or rolled off something. Diagnosis is made by CT or MRI scans and eye examinations. Skull fractures are usually not present, rather hemorrhages in the brain.

Parents of children receiving out of home care should discuss all forms of discipline with the caregiver. This discussion should include references to Shaken Baby Syndrome.

*Sources* - Children's Trust Fund of Texas; American professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Multiple sources are available on the internet under Shaken Baby Syndrome.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Division of Licensing, provides this general information on Shaken Baby Syndrome as a public service to visitors to their web site:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Information\\_for\\_Child\\_Care\\_Professionals/sbs\\_sids.asp#years](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Information_for_Child_Care_Professionals/sbs_sids.asp#years).

