

## How about making a safety plan?

Make a list for your fridge to help remind you what to do when you are in danger of “losing it”

- A list of things to try that settle your baby – you’ll get to know what works
- A list of ‘Emergency’ numbers – your GP, Child Health Nurse, Parent Help Line, ambulance, supportive friends.
- A list of things that calm you down: ten slow deep breaths whilst thinking of something special; looking at the photo that makes you melt.
- If you are worried that your baby is really ill then take him/her to the nearest hospital Accident and Emergency unit. Get a friend or neighbour to drive you instead of driving yourself, or call an ambulance

***Make sure that everyone who cares for your baby knows about the dangers of shaking. Give them this brochure and make sure they read it!***

For more parenting information and support contact your local Maternal and Child Health Nurse.

Your local centre can be found at [www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/)

MCH Line 13 22 29

Parentline VIC 13 22 89

These telephone services provide age appropriate information, advice and support to parents. They can also link you into local community, health and support services.

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### Shaken Baby Prevention Project

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### Brain Injury Australia

[www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au](http://www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au)

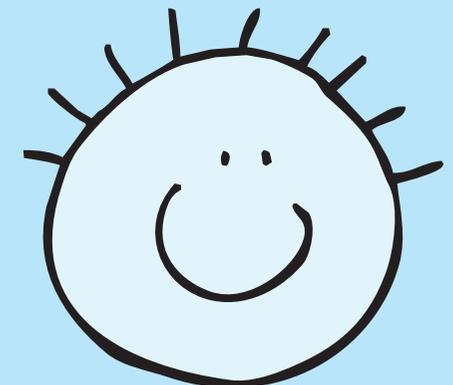
NAPCAN is an independent charity and the leading advocacy body for prevention of child abuse and neglect.

[www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

**NAPCAN**  
PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

## IT'S NOT OK TO SHAKE BABIES

It's **NOT**  
**ok**  
to shake  
**BABIES**



# It's never OK to shake babies, infants or children

Caring for babies isn't easy especially when they keep on crying. Parents sometimes lose control and shake their babies. But babies can suffer brain damage and even die through being shaken. The younger the baby, the greater the risk, but even small children can be seriously injured.

## Why is shaking a baby dangerous?

Babies have big heads compared to the rest of their bodies and weak necks. This means their heads flop around when moved suddenly. Shaking can burst tiny blood vessels inside the skull or the baby's brain. The soft brain tissue can bang against the baby's skull and get bruised. Even swinging or tossing in fun can cause damage.

## Shaking a baby can cause:

- blindness
- deafness
- learning difficulties
- fits
- brain damage
- DEATH

Never shake your baby if you think he/she has stopped breathing. Call Emergency immediately and ask for an ambulance – they'll tell you what to do. It's a good idea for all parents to learn First Aid and resuscitation – you never know when you might need it.

## Remember: shaking isn't play.

It's still OK to cuddle and play with babies. In fact, your baby needs to play with you and spend lots of time being close to get the best brain development. Babies' brains are wiring up for life – playing and talking with you is the way it happens.

## Why does my baby cry so much?

Actually, babies can cry a lot – between 2 and 3 hours a day is pretty normal. Crying is their only way of getting our attention when they are uncomfortable.

They may be:

- hungry, tired, or wet and need changing
- too hot or too cold
- upset or scared
- unwell or have wind
- lonely or just plain bored!

## What can I do?

- Try a dummy – sucking is soothing for most babies.
- Gently rub him or pat his/her nappy.
- Rock your baby snuggled up to your chest so he/she can feel your heartbeat.
- Sing or talk to your baby. Does he/she have a favourite song?
- Try 'swaddling' him/her in a light sheet. This makes babies feel secure. Be careful not to cover your baby's head.

## If you think you are starting to lose it ... take a break

- Place baby safely in the cot on his/her back and walk away for a short while. Babies can't die from just crying, but do check on your baby every 10 minutes.
- Play your favourite music, watch TV or have a soothing snack – never alcohol. It makes things worse.
- Take a short shower.
- Ring a helpful friend or relative. Tell them how you feel.
- Ask someone else to take over for a while so you can calm down.
- Don't keep trying to manage on your own! Babies are meant to be shared – the good and bad times. We all need help sometimes. Don't be afraid to ask.