When the baby cries

When your baby cries, remember that this is the way he or she communicates with you. Please be patient and see what your baby needs. Try these helpful techniques:

- Pick up the baby and comfort her.
- Check the baby’s diaper and change it if wet or soiled.
- See if the baby is too hot or too cold.
- Burp the baby.
- Feed the baby slowly.
- Offer the baby a pacifier.
- Take the baby to a quiet room.
- Hold the baby against your chest and walk or rock him.
- Hold the baby horizontally and gently blow across his ear.
- Take the baby for a ride or put her in a baby swing.

If the crying wears you out or upsets you, separate yourself from the baby for a while. Put the baby in her crib, leave the room and shut the door. If possible, ask someone else to take over comforting the baby. Then, call someone to talk to or do something you find relaxing.
Shaken Baby Syndrome
WHY BABIES GET INJURED BY SHAKING

Shaking a young child has a different effect than it does with an adult, or even a 10-year-old. This is because a young child has a large, heavy head, weak neck muscles and a brain that is still developing. The brain has not yet fully developed its outer protective layer, so it can be injured more easily. And, the space between the brain and skull is larger, so the brain can travel farther, gaining more speed before impact with the skull. Shaking a baby causes a whiplash effect. The brain strikes the inside of the skull as the baby’s head rapidly moves back and forth. The brain starts bleeding, causing pressure that damages the tissue. The result can be permanent brain damage. In other cases, shaking has damaged the spine or caused broken bones or dislocation.

Why it matters

One-third of SBS survivors suffer from profound disabilities that affect the child’s ability to breathe, swallow, sit up or walk. Many of these children live in a vegetative state or a condition that is near vegetative.

Another one-third of the victims have serious disabilities that result in deafness, blindness or severe visual impairments, severe seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, serious behavioral disorders and severe learning disabilities that affect their ability to live independently.

Of the remaining one-third of the victims, there is a range of disabilities from moderate to mild. These children will sometimes have visual and/or hearing disabilities, learning disabilities that will affect their ability to read, write and learn, milder seizure disorders and behavioral disorders. (Source: The Shaken Baby Alliance, www.shakenbaby.com)

The dangers

Shaking a young child can cause brain damage or spinal injuries that result in:

- Death
- Blindness
- Mental retardation
- Seizures
- Learning disabilities
- Cerebral palsy
- Paralysis

Shaken Baby Syndrome is 100% preventable

Here’s how to play it safe:

- Never, ever shake a baby.
- Hold and cuddle the baby to show you love him or her.
- Learn what to do if your baby won’t stop crying.
- Make sure anyone who handles your baby knows the dangers of shaking.
- If you suspect the baby has been injured through a fall, playing or accidental shaking, go to a doctor immediately.