

Parent Education on Child Safety: Prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports programs

Children’s residential facilities and foster residence settings, with a certification to provide prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports, must provide the required education in this document to a parent on or before the day their child is physically present at the facility ([245A.25, subd. 6, \(d\)](#)). The education must include these topics:

- How to safely bathe an infant or child
- How to reduce the risk of sudden unexpected infant death including:
 - safe sleep precautions in [Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.1435](#)
 - dangers of co-sleeping
- How to reduce the risk of abusive head trauma from shaking infants and young children

The required education for each topic is in the sections below. Optional resources are also included that programs may choose to provide in addition to the required education.

Although a parent may already know this important information, the program must document that the parent received the required education and whether the parent agrees to comply with these safeguards.

If the parent does not agree to comply with the safeguards, the program must continue to provide education until the parent agrees to comply with the safeguards. The parental supervision plan must include the intervention, frequency, and staff responsible for providing the continuing education.

How to safely bathe an infant or child

Required education

Provide education to the parent on these safe bathing practices:

- **Never** leave a **child or infant** unattended around water.
- **Never** put an **infant** in a tub when the water is running.
- **Only two to four inches of water** should be in a tub to bathe an **infant**.

How to reduce the risk of sudden unexpected infant death

Required education

Provide education to the parent on the contents of: [Safe Sleep for Your Baby](#).

You must also inform the parent of the following additional safe sleep precautions:

- That infants under one year of age should not wear clothing or sleepwear that has weighted materials, a hood, or a bib while sleeping.
- If the parent chooses to use a swaddle, the swaddle should:
 - wrap over the infant's arms and fasten securely **only** across the upper torso;
 - **not** constrict the infant's hips or legs;
 - **not** have weighted materials, a hood, or a bib; and
 - **not** be so tight that it restricts the infant's ability to breathe or so loose that the fabric could cover the infant's nose and mouth.
- Their infant must sleep in an approved crib and cannot sleep in a bassinet or play yard while at the program. Cribs will be inspected monthly and certified annually by the program. Parents may also use a cradleboard if the program inspects the cradleboard monthly.
- Infants under one year of age that need to sleep wearing a helmet should only use a helmet as authorized by a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, licensed occupational therapist, or licensed physical therapist.

Optional resources

- [Safe Sleep Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [What Does a Safe Sleep Environment Look Like?](#)
- [Interactive Safe Sleep Room](#)
- [Tummy Time](#)

Safe sleep resources in multiple languages and for specific cultures are available at the [Minnesota Department of Health Safe to Sleep Materials webpage](#).

How to reduce the risk of abusive head trauma and shaken baby syndrome

Required education

Provide education to the parent on the following information.

What is abusive head trauma and shaken baby syndrome?

Abusive head trauma is a preventable and severe form of physical child abuse that results in an injury to the brain of a child. Abusive head trauma often happens when a parent or caregiver becomes angry

or frustrated because of a child's crying. It is caused by violent shaking and/or blunt impact. The resulting injury can cause bleeding around the brain or on the inside back layer of the eyes. Nearly all victims of abusive head trauma suffer serious, long-term health consequences and at least one of every four babies who experience abusive head trauma dies from it. Shaken baby syndrome is a type of abusive head trauma. ¹

Shaken baby syndrome occurs in children, usually under 1 year. Shaken baby syndrome involves violent or vigorous shaking of a baby, and a single episode as short as 5-20 seconds can result in the following:

- Blindness
- Intellectual disabilities
- Seizures
- Cerebral palsy
- Hearing loss
- Paralysis
- Broken bones
- Speech or learning disabilities
- Severe developmental delays
- Death

Shaken baby syndrome is 100% preventable and there are numerous resources available to parents and caregivers to provide support and encouragement.²

How to prevent abusive head trauma and shaken baby syndrome

Crying, including long periods of inconsolable crying, is a **normal behavior in infants**. Shaking, throwing, or hitting a baby is **never** the right response to crying. Parents, please follow these tips:

- Parenting is hard work! You may face many different situations and challenges every day. **It's ok to ask for help.**
- Understand that infant crying is worse in the first few months of life, but it will get better as the child grows.
- Try calming a crying baby by rocking gently, offering a pacifier, holding your baby against your bare skin, singing or talking softly, taking a walk with a stroller, or going for a drive in the car.
- If the baby won't stop crying, check for signs of illness and call the doctor if you think the child is sick.
- If you are getting upset, focus on calming yourself down. Put the baby in a safe place and walk away to calm down, checking on the baby every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Call a friend, relative, neighbor, mental health crisis line, or your child's healthcare provider for support.

- **If you are residing in a residential setting with program staff, reach out to program staff for assistance and suggestions.**
- Never leave your baby with a person who is easily irritated, has a temper, or a history of violence.¹

Optional resources

[Never Shake: Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome](#) (Video produced by the Missouri Children's Trust Fund, 7:48)

[Shaken Baby Syndrome](#) (Video produced by The Doctors TV 1:48)

[MDH: Shaken Baby Syndrome Webpage](#)

[CDC: Preventing Abusive Head Trauma in Children Webpage](#)

[Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance Shaken Baby Syndrome Webpage](#)

¹ CDC. (March 15, 2021). Preventing Abusive Head Trauma.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/Abusive-Head-Trauma.html>

² MDH. (August 10, 2023). Shaken Baby Syndrome.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/infantmort/shakenbaby.html>