



Seventh Generation Christian Academy

SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME & HEAD TRAUMA PREVENTION POLICY

Seventh Generation Christian Academy believes that preventing, recognizing, responding, and reporting Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality early childhood education, and educating families.

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome & Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT)

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. AHT can occur in children up to 5 years of age. Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including: brain damage, problems with memory and attention, blindness or hearing loss; intellectual, speech or learning disabilities; and developmental delays.

PROCEDURES/ PRACTICE/ RECOGNIZING:

The signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome or head trauma include:

- Irritability and/or high-pitched crying
- Difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness
- Difficulty breathing
- Inability to lift the head
- Seizures
- Lack of appetite, vomiting, or difficulty sucking or swallowing
- Poor feeding/sucking
- No smiling or vocalization
- Inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone
- Bruises which may be found on the upper arms, rib cage or head resulting from gripping or hitting the head.

RESPONDING TO (EMERGENCY RESPONSE):

If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will

- Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
- Call the parent/guardian.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.
- Report to the appropriate child protective services agency or law enforcement, if applicable.

REPORTING:

Instances of suspected child maltreatment in an early childhood setting are reported to the Abuse hotline by calling 1(800) 962-2873.

SBS/AHT Strategies for Educators & Parents

INJURY PREVENTION:

Infant crying is normal behavior, which improves as a child age. Parents/guardians, educators, and coworkers should discuss in advance what calming strategies are successful with a particular child at home or in the early childhood setting. Educators should develop proactive strategies to manage stress levels and appropriate responses to a crying child. This includes being self-aware and noticing when the educator may become frustrated or angry. Educators will also determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, educators will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

Prevention strategies to assist parents/guardian/staff in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

- Rocking, holding, or walking with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close and repeatedly bend the knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or other white noise.
- Hand the child to another educator/parent/guardian

In addition, Seventh Generation Christian Academy:

- Allows time for educators to step away and regroup to have an immediate break away from the children/classroom, while providing supervision for the classroom through the support of another staff member.

- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a moment away if needed.

SBS/AHT PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS:

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- Shaking or jerking a child out of frustration
- Tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat.
- Pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture.

Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including:

- Brain damage, problems with memory and attention, cerebral palsy;
- Blindness or hearing loss;
- Intellectual, speech or learning disabilities; and
- Developmental delays.

RESOURCES:

The following resources are available to parents/guardians and caregivers:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention-at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx
- The National center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: <http://dontshake.org/familyresources>
- The Period of Purple Crying: <http://purplecrying.info/>
- Caring for Our Children Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma: <http://cfoc.nrckids.org>
- Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/>
- Early Development & Well Being, Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org
- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

SBS/AHT APPLICATION:

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, educators, substitute teachers, and volunteers.