



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

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NEVER SHAKE A BABY

During Child Abuse Prevention Month Caregivers Are Cautioned to "Take A Break - Don't Shake!"

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) is taking advantage of April, as "National Child Abuse Prevention Month" to raise awareness of *Shaken Baby Syndrome*, as a real and dangerous threat to young children. *Shaken Baby Syndrome* describes signs and symptoms that result from the shaking of an infant or small child, which can result in temporary or permanent damage to the brain, and even death.

"One of the saddest things about *Shaken Baby Syndrome* is that it is usually unintentional and preventable," said Pam Slater-Price, Chairwoman of the County Board of Supervisors, and long time advocate against domestic violence and child abuse. "Most cases occur when a frustrated caregiver loses control with an inconsolable crying baby, and we need to help educate them so they understand what can happen if they shake the baby or are rough with the baby. Child Abuse Prevention Month is a great time to raise awareness for this cause."

HHS will kick off its "Take A Break - Don't Shake!" campaign at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 21, on the West Steps of the County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, 92101. The event will include information, demonstrations and new materials about Shaken Baby Syndrome.

While the number of injuries and deaths from *Shaken Baby Syndrome* is difficult to calculate, it is recognized as a very preventable cause of mortality and long-term disability that occurs among infants. Each year, nearly 1,300 U.S. children experience severe or fatal head trauma from child abuse, and 30 per 100,000 children under age 1 suffered inflicted brain injuries.

"Part of the problem is that grownups don't realize how strong they are, in comparison to an infant," said Dr. Nancy Bowen, County Public Health Officer. "If someone were to grab me by the shoulders and shake me, I might find it alarming, but that same amount of shaking with a baby can cause horrible damage, as their fragile brain is thrust back and forth inside their skull."

For more information visit the www.dontshake.com.

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Take A Break ...

Don't Shake!



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April is National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency - 04/2005