Infant Crying and ICON

1 What is ICON?

ICON is a preventative program based around helping parents cope with a crying baby and promote safe comforting methods. The word ICON represents the following message:

I- Infant crying is normal
C- Comforting methods can sometimes soothe the baby
O-It's **OK** to walk away
N- Never, ever shake a baby

2 What is Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)?

Previously known as 'Shaken baby syndrome,' usually sustained via shaking and/or impact of an infant head, consists of:

- Sub dural hemorrhages
- brain injuries affecting functional tissue
- Retinal hemorrhages
- Can have associated upper spinal, long bone and organ injuries

3 Risk of Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)

Certain conditions can increase risk of babies crying and therefore a risk of AHT; conditions include:

- Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD)
- Colic
- Dystonia
- Babies who have been premature
- Neo-natal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
- Feeding difficulties
- High Frequency crying

How Abusive Head Trauma presents:

- Collapse
- Septic/meningitis picture
- NAS (Neonatal abstinence syndrome)
- Breathing difficulties/apneoa
- Injuries/bruises: especially head, neck or torso

4 What are the key messages of ICON?

- Crying is a normal part of child development.
- All babies cry a lot from the ages of 2 weeks to 3-4 months, but can vary from baby to baby
- Crying seems to peak in the late afternoon and early evening
- Although crying is normal, it can be very stressful for parents
- Shaking a baby, even for a second can cause significant injury or death
- If you are struggling, better to put baby down safely and walk away for a few minutes

5 What can urgent responders do?

- Consider AHT in the above presentations
- Check parents & carers know about ICON
- Normalise parent/carer feeling towards their crying baby
- Ensure Father/male carers are aware of ICONs messaging.
- Liaise with child's Health Visitor, Family Nurse Partner or GP if there are concerns.
- Treat injuries and illness in parallel with safeguarding
- Follow Child Protection procedures / bruising in non-mobile baby protocol.

6 Staff can discuss the early crying curve with parent and carers.

A baby may start to cry more frequently about 2 weeks of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer over the next few weeks, hitting a peak at 6-8 weeks old

7 Directing parents to seeking support

Babies can cry for many reasons such as tired, hungry, wet/dirty or if they are unwell.

If you think something is wrong with your baby or the crying will not stop, speak to GP, Midwife, Family Nurse or Health Visitor

- If you are concerned a baby is unwell contact your GP or call NHS 24 - 111
- CRY-SIS National helpline 08451-228669
- Head to the ICON website

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EDINBURGH CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Figure 1