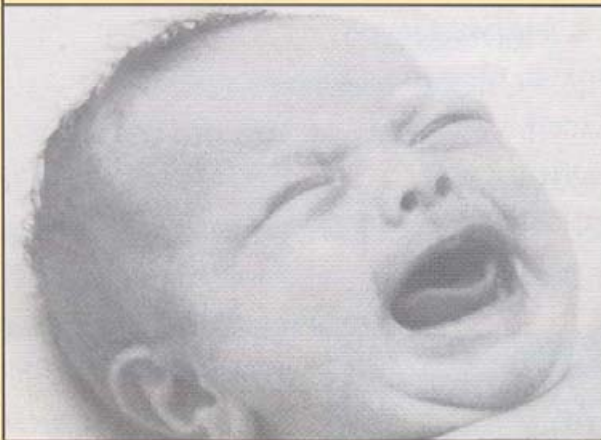


**D O N ' T  
S H A K E  
T H E  
B A B Y**



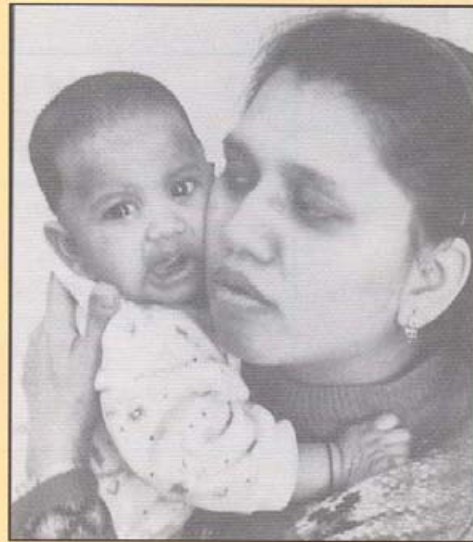
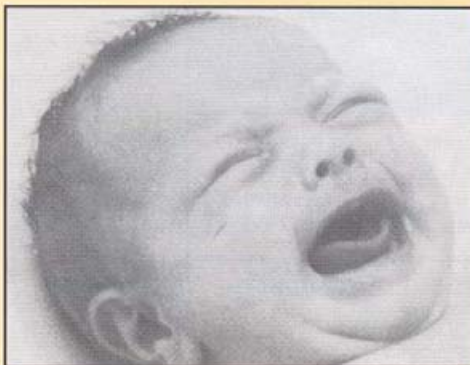
**SHAKING MAY CAUSE  
BRAIN DAMAGE OR DEATH**

Leeds Area Child Protection Committee  
Don't Shake the Baby Campaign

## CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW BABY

You will be the most important person to this baby for a long time. The feelings you have may range from those of wonder, love and happiness to complete despair. Experiences and emotions which are felt and hardly ever talked about include:~

- UNABLE TO MAKE A DECISION (even about the simplest of tasks)
- LOSS
- JEALOUSY
- INADEQUACY
- ANGER
- REJECTION
- IMPRISONMENT
- GUILT
- NUMBING EXHAUSTION
- LOSS OF SELF ESTEEM
- ANXIETY
- DEPRESSION



You are not alone, these experiences and emotions are normal. Sometimes the positive feelings as well as the more negative feelings are so intense they are frightening. If they become overwhelming you may want to talk to your health visitor, family doctor, or other professional.

For some people becoming a parent is like an earthquake - a complete upheaval. and some emotions appear which are totally unexpected. How you get to know and love your baby *may* be affected by the birth, how much your baby cries and how tired you become in the following days, weeks and months. All children have their own personalities, the process of getting to know your child starts at birth and never ends. Every day is different - some are good and some are bad.

A CRYING baby may make some feelings much worse, and a baby that cries persistently can lead you to SHAKING and THROWING your baby. Actions which you would not think you were capable of carrying out.

Most parents feel like this occasionally and some actually find themselves going to harm the baby, even when he/she is loved and wanted.

**DON'T SHAKE THE BABY**

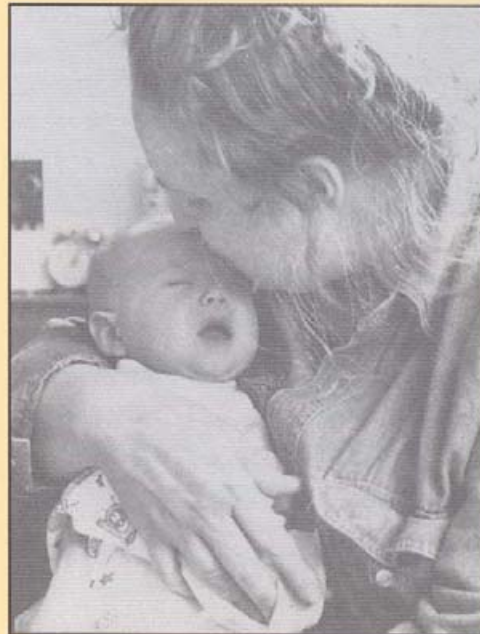
## **SHAKING, THROWING, SMOTHERING MAY CAUSE BRAIN DAMAGE OR DEATH**



"I don't seem to be able to do anything to help. I feel such a failure and I find it so hard to cope, I feel sometimes that I might harm my baby."

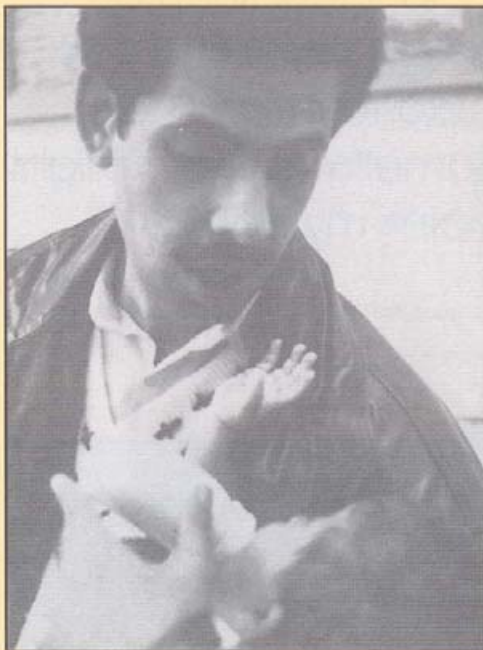
Feeling tense and irritable will sometimes make the baby feel the same way. Having time off from being a parent on a regular basis will help to prevent this cycle from happening. A baby will not cry on purpose, it does not know how to be naughty.

**Smacking does not help** and the baby will not understand. **DON'T SHAKE THE BABY** Even rough play such as throwing a baby up in the air can be dangerous.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

All babies cry and some much more than others. You may want to talk with your health visitor or try the following to see whether they help:



- hold the baby, try to soothe him/her by gentle rocking, talk quietly and tell your baby how much he/she is loved
- try changing the nappy or feeding, but do not rush the baby's feed
- take the baby for a ride in the pushchair or car - remember always to use a car seat
- contact your family doctor if you think your baby is unwell, it is best to make sure there is nothing physically wrong

- talk to a trusted person about caring for your baby
- sometimes you can try too hard. Give yourself a break. Family, friends and trusted neighbours will often help if you ask them
- if you feel desperate place the baby in a cot and walk away. Check that the baby is alright after 10 minutes.



## **DO NOT DESPAIR**



For most people being a parent is the hardest job they will ever do, but it can also be the most rewarding. Your baby will eventually grow out of crying constantly, and you deserve all the support you can get.

### **Leeds Area Child Protection Committee**

#### **SOURCES OF ADVICE AND HELP**

<b>Homestart</b>	Offers support, friendship and practical assistance to families	<b>0113-244 2419</b>
<b>Samaritans</b>		<b>0113-245 6789</b>
<b>NHS Direct</b>		<b>08454647</b>
<b>CRY-Sis</b>	Volunteers offer support from 9am to 10pm	<b>0207-4045011</b>

**Help is also available from your health visitor,  
social worker or your family doctor**

#### **LOCAL INFORMATION**