

7 minute briefing - ICON



All Babies Cry - I.C.O.N cope!

1 Background

CCS has launched the ICON campaign which aims to support all parents and all carers with interventions for comforting and coping with a crying baby. The call for resources comes from a number of infant deaths and serious case reviews where a baby has died or been seriously injured as a result of abusive head trauma.

2 Why it matters

Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) – also known as 'shaken baby syndrome' – causes catastrophic brain injuries, which can lead to death, or significant long term health and learning disabilities. Abusive head trauma is the most common cause of death or long term disability in babies. 24 out of 100,000 hospital admissions for babies are due to abusive head trauma. 200 children are killed or hurt annually in the UK. These figures are likely to underestimate the real numbers involved.

3 Information

The programme – [ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope](#) – provides key messages and resources to let parents and all carers know that babies cry to communicate and that there are ways of coping with this crying. Resources include leaflets and video clips which can be shared with parents and all carers at any contact with midwives, health visitors, GPs, social workers, and other professionals who come into contact with families.

4 The ICON approach

The ICON approach recommends all parents and all carers try and soothe their baby through comforting methods. ICON guidance suggests ways of calming the child before putting them down in a safe environment for a few minutes if the parent is struggling and only as a last resort. The programme advises, and provides professionals...

...with a toolkit, including a 'crying plan' which they can complete with parents so they can plan in advance who to turn to for support if the crying becomes too much. ICON always recommends contacting a health professional such as a health visitor, midwife or GP for support with their baby and always recommends that the leaflet is given with a conversation to accompany it. Offer ICON as an alternative to a situation where frustration (often linked to tiredness) can lead to abusive head trauma.

6 What to do

Familiarise yourself with <https://iconcope.org/> and [local pages](#) for resources and information and attend training when available. Take the opportunity to raise awareness of ICON among colleagues. Talk through the key points in the ICON leaflet and the Crying Plan with parents and parents to be and encourage them to share the information with any family and friends who may care for their child.



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7 Questions to consider

- Are you aware of the key messages, when and how to share?
- Infant crying is normal and it will stop
- Comfort methods will sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop
- OK to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you
- Never shake or hurt a baby

