

7 minute briefing on:



www.iconcope.org

1. What is ICON?

ICON is a preventative programme to help parents and carers cope with a crying baby. 'ICON' is an acronym which represents the key messages:

- 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. Abusive Head Trauma (AHT).

The ultimate aim of ICON is to reduce the incidence of AHT which is the most common cause of death and disability in babies. AHT occurs when caregivers lose control and shake the baby. Approximately 200 children are killed or hurt annually in the UK as a result of AHT - these figures are likely to underestimate the real numbers involved.

3. What are the key messages of ICON?

- Crying is a normal part of child development
- All babies will cry a lot from the ages of 2 weeks to 3-4 months, but this can vary from baby to baby.
- Crying seems to peak in the late afternoon and early evening... but this can vary between babies.
- Crying is normal... all parents can feel stressed but babies are not doing this on purpose.
- Shaking a baby can cause significant injury and even death. Better to put your baby down safely and walk away for a few minutes if you are struggling.

4. What does the research say?

Research shows that around **70% of babies who are shaken are shaken by men**. Implementation of the ICON programme should include male caregivers and use the best opportunities to reach them as well as support all parents/caregivers with information about crying and how to cope with a crying baby. Providing information about comfort methods can help:



5. Implementing ICON.

Research shows that AHT prevention programmes are most effective when the same message is given by different professionals on a number of occasions. As with safer sleep advice, this is not solely the responsibility for health agencies. All practitioners should take the opportunity, when they can, to be professionally curious about parental stresses and coping with a newborn baby.

7. When to seek help and support:

Babies can cry for many reasons such as if they are hungry, tired, wet/ dirty or if they are unwell. If you think there is something wrong with baby or the crying won't stop speak to a GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

- If you are worried baby is unwell call NHS 111.
- NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000
- Visit ICON website



6. What can you do?

Familiarise yourself with the ICON resources and attend training if available. Take the opportunity to raise awareness of ICON among colleagues. Talk through the key points in the ICON leaflet with parents and carers – encourage them to share the information with family and friends who may care for their child. ICON always recommends contacting a health professional (health visitor, midwife, GP) for support with their baby and always recommends that the leaflet is given with a conversation to accompany it.