

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Policy

Belief Statement

We, **The Children's House**, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality childcare, and educating families.

Background

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death¹.

Procedure/Practice

Recognizing SBS/AHT. Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to instances of SBS/AHT. If SBS/AHT is suspected, staff will:

- Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
- Call the parents/guardians.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting SBS/AHT

Instances of suspected child maltreatment in childcare are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling **1-800-859-0829** or by emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov.

Prevention strategies to assist staff in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Try to distract the child with a toy.
- Turn on music or white noise.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.

Prohibited behaviors

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- Shaking or jerking a child
- Tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- Pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age

All staff take training on SBS/AHT within first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age.

Application

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

Communication Staff

- Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the childcare facility shall review the policy with all staff who provide care for children up to five years of age.
- All current staff members and newly hired staff will be trained in SBS/AHT before providing care for children up to five years of age.
- Staff will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the individual's name, the date the center's policy was given and explained to the individual.
- The childcare facility shall keep the SBS/AHT staff acknowledgement form in the staff member's file.

Parents/Guardians

- The childcare facility shall review the policy with parents/guardians of currently enrolled children up to five years of age.
- A copy of the policy will be given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children up to five years of age on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility.
- Acknowledgement of SBS Policy Received

Acknowledgement by Parent or Guardian

I, the undersigned parent of _____ (child's full name), do hereby state that I have received, read and understand and agree with the facility's **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Policy**.

Date of Child's Enrollment: _____

Name of Parents/Guardians: _____

Signature of Parents/Guardians: _____

Date: _____