

## **Shaken Baby & Abusive Head Trauma Prevention Policy**

Wesleyan Child Care Center believes that preventing, recognizing and 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 child care and educating families.

### **What is SBS/AHT?**

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 death. According to FL Child Care Rule (2.8 Child Discipline G.) each child care facility licensed to care for children up to five years of age shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT.

AHT can occur in children up to 5 years of age. Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including: brain damage, problems with memory and attention, blindness or hearing loss; intellectual, speech or learning disabilities; and developmental delays.

### **Procedures/Practice**

Recognizing: The signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome or head trauma include:

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, or difficulty sucking or swallowing

Poor feeding/sucking

No smiling or vocalization

Inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone

Bruises which may be found on the upper arms, rib cage or head resulting from gripping or hitting the head.

**Responding to (Emergency Response):** If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will

Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.

Implement school-wide Emergency Response Procedure.

Call the parent/guardian.

If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

**Reporting:** Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to the Department of Children and Family Services by calling 1-866-762-2237. Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to Abuse Hotline 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

## **Strategies for Caregivers and Parents**

A child is usually shaken out of frustration, often when the child is persistently crying or irritable. The following strategies may work some of the time; but sometimes nothing will comfort a crying child. Caregivers will 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, caregivers 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 the knees.

Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.

Gently run or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.

Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a toy.

Take the child for a ride in a stroller.

Turn on music or other white noise.

Hand the child to another caregiver.

In addition, Wesleyan Child Care Center:

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

Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

## **Prohibited Behaviors**

Behaviors that are prohibited include:

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.

## **Resources**

The following resources are available to parents/guardians and caregivers:

The American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.healthychildren.org/English/safetyprevention-at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safetyprevention-at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx)

The National center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: <http://dontshake.org/familyresources>

The Period of Purple Crying: <http://purplecrying.info/>

Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Early Development & Well Being, Zero to Three: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

American Red Cross: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## **Application**

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