Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

SAMPLE POLICY

# Belief Statement

We, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of facility), 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 child care, 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 death.  This policy has been developed in compliance with Montana Licensure of Child Care Facilities State Law Rule 37.95.169.

# Procedure/Practice

Recognizing:

* 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:

* If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:
  + Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director/owner.
  + Call the parents/guardians.
  + If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting:

* Instances of suspected child abuse and neglect are reported within 24 hours to the department child abuse hotline at 1 (866) 820-5437.

**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.
* Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
* Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
* Turn on music or white noise.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**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 assist staff members understand how to care for infants**

List out strategies here

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

List out strategies here

# Resources

* List resources such as a staff person designated to provide support or a local county/community resource:

# Communication

Staff

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(name of facility) will review the policy with all staff who provide care for children up to five years of age.
* Staff will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the individual's name, the date the policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment.
* The child care facility shall keep the signed **SBS/AHT staff acknowledgement form** in the staff member’s file.

Parents/Guardians

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(name of facility) will 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.
* Parents/guardians will sign an acknowledgement form.
* The child care facility shall keep the signed parent acknowledgement form in the child’s file.

# 