

# Safeguarding MATTERS



**SPECIAL  
EDITION**



## Safeguarding Infants

The ICON Programme is an evidenced based approach to reducing abusive head trauma (AHT) in babies triggered by crying. AHT is the leading cause of death or long term disability in babies and children subject to abuse.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships for LLR are supporting the roll out of this programme to ensure as many parents as possible have access to ICON information.

**ICON is a mnemonic which stands for:**

- I** = Infant crying is normal
- C** = Comfort methods can help
- O** = It's OK to walk away
- N** = Never, ever shake a baby

**Some babies are more at risk of AHT these are:**

- Baby boys
- Premature and low birth weight babies
- Babies under the age of 6 months
- Babies where there has been previous child protection services involvement.

Parents and carers are supported to understand that crying is normal and to anticipate the crying, plan for it and

consider coping strategies and support prior to birth and post-natally.

Overleaf is a 7-minute briefing to introduce you to the subject of crying babies, encourage reflection and familiarise yourself with the resources available for anyone working with parents / expectant parents:

- Short videos and clips that share key messages on how to cope with babies crying
- The crying curve to explain crying
- A crying plan to help parents and carers plan how they will cope with crying
- Leaflets that explain ICON for full term and premature babies

The ICON website is at [www.iconcope.org](http://www.iconcope.org)

All materials can be translated on the website and the "browse aloud" reads out the information in different languages

Launch events are taking place on 25th and 28th April 2022. Follow the link to book a place:

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/leicester-safeguarding-children-partnership-board-and-leicestershireamprutland-safeguarding-children-partnership-8043549452](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/leicester-safeguarding-children-partnership-board-and-leicestershireamprutland-safeguarding-children-partnership-8043549452)

A public campaign will run in the summer to support the ICON messages.



## 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.

## 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](#)



## 3. What are the key messages of ICON?

- Crying is a normal part of child development.
- The length of time a baby cries in 24 hours is illustrated in the crying curve and this varies baby to baby but crying tends to increase from week 2 and peak at around 2 month of age and decreasing around 3 to 5 months.
- 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 in a safe place after checking that they are not unwell and walk away for a few minutes to calm yourself.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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:

