



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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STATEWIDE EFFORT UNITES HOSPITALS AND EDUCATES PARENTS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF CHILD ABUSE

Boise, ID (March 29, 2006) – The message to parents and caregivers is simple – Fragile: Handle With Care – and the biggest supporters of this message are Idaho’s children. Beginning April 3, every newborn in Idaho will remind parents of this important message by wearing a specially designed onesie from St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital and the Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

A onesie and an informational packet about the importance of handling babies with care will be given to the parents of every child born during the first full week of April. This statewide effort will educate new parents about the dangers that exist when frustrating parent moments arise, especially during a newborn’s early stages of development.

“Taking care of an infant can be challenging, especially when it seems like the crying will never stop. Even if you have tried to calm your child but nothing seems to work, it's important to stay in control of your temper,” said Dr. David Christensen, president of the Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “It's never okay to shake, throw, or hit your child. If you feel as though you could lose control take a deep breath, take a time out, or call someone for support.”

Approximately twenty hospitals in Idaho are spreading the message of child abuse prevention by holding media events throughout the state of Idaho in the cities of Boise, Nampa, Pocatello, and Coeur d’Alene. Media representatives are invited to hospitals and newborn nurseries statewide to discuss the risks associated with shaking a baby, how to sooth a crying baby, and the importance of handling a child with care.

“Parents and caretakers need to be aware of the injuries that can be caused by hitting, throwing, and shaking an infant or a child,” said Dr. Michael Sexton, medical director of St. Luke’s Children At Risk Evaluation Services (CARES). “Children are fragile and people need to understand how easily a child can be seriously harmed, or even killed.”

EDITOR’S NOTE:

- Dr. Michael Sexton, medical director of St. Luke’s CARES will be available.
- Dr. David Christensen, president of the Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics will be available for an interview.
- Sherry Iverson, director of Women’s and Children’s Community Education.
- Newborns will be wearing special onesies in the nursery – GREAT PHOTO OPP.

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