

FINAL PRESS RELEASE

ICON Week: Organisations come together to raise awareness of infant crying and how to cope

“Babies cry, you can cope!” that’s the key message from NHS, local authorities and healthcare organisations from across the country who have come together this September to promote lifesaving messages to parents.

Research suggests that some parents and care givers can lose control when a baby’s crying becomes too much. Some go on to shake a baby with devastating consequences.

Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) causes catastrophic brain injuries, which can lead to death, or significant long-term health and learning disabilities.

ICON is a programme adopted by health and social care organisations in the UK to provide information about infant crying, including how to cope, support parents/carers, reduce stress and prevent abusive head trauma in babies.

The UK’s first ever ICON week, spanning from 27 September – 1 October 2021, aims to raise awareness of infant crying and how to cope in a bid to support parents/carers and prevent serious injury, illness and even death of young babies a result of these incidents.

The evidence-based programme consists of a series of brief interventions that reinforce the simple message making up the ICON acronym:

- I** Infant crying is normal and it will stop
- C** Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop
- O** It’s OK to walk away for a few minutes if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you
- N** Never ever shake or hurt a baby

Most babies start to cry more frequently from two weeks of age, with a peak usually being seen around 6-8 weeks. Organisations coming together from 27 September – 1 October, aim to spread the messages to help normalise infant crying and share coping techniques to help parents to deal with the stress it can cause.

Founder of ICON, Dr Suzanne Smith, said:

“Abusive head trauma can occur in any environment when a parent or carer is on the edge due to infant crying.

“The pressure that families are under is only being exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic and the impact can be far reaching and have devastating consequences.

“ICON is about sharing messages of support and advice to parents and carers who might be struggling to cope. We aim to normalise the fact that babies do cry and some aren’t easily soothed, we want to share information far and wide about what to do in these situations and how to stay calm.

“By sharing these vitally important messages and coping techniques to carers, we are working towards eliminating to babies which is utterly preventable.

As one Dad recently reported “ICON is clear and very easy to understand – just what you want when you are in a state of delirium!”.

If you think you need help and are struggling to cope, don’t continue to struggle. Help is available from your midwife, health visitor, GP or go online and there are more resources on the ICON website: <http://www.iconcope.org>.

ENDS