

## News Release

For immediate release

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### British Columbia's second symposium on Shaken Baby Syndrome

**Vancouver, B.C.** – The second B.C. symposium on shaken baby syndrome (SBS) will be held on Friday, May 19, 2006 at the Chan Auditorium at the Education & Research Centre for Child Health, at the Child & Family Research Institute.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Fraser Health, BC Children's Hospital, and the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome-USA (NCSBS) are sponsoring the symposium in an effort to stimulate awareness and education about SBS, a violent form of child abuse.

SBS is a serious problem in North America and B.C. It is the leading cause of non-accidental death in infants and is the most common cause for inflicted brain injury in the first year of a child's life. Of the babies shaken each year, nearly one-third die. Of those that survive, approximately 80% are left with permanent brain damage. Shaking usually occurs when a frustrated caregiver loses control with an inconsolable crying baby. Crying is the number one trigger leading to an infant being shaken.

"Shaking a baby is always serious, often resulting in life long consequences," said the Honourable Linda Reid, Minister of State for Early Child Care. "The Ministry is pleased to be one of the sponsors of this event again this year. The internationally respected experts who are presenting at this symposium are impressive. We will all learn from their expertise."

"Shaken baby syndrome is tragic, but it is also preventable," said Marilyn Barr, Director of the BC Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Program located at BC Children's Hospital, and Executive Director of the NCSBS. "The BC Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Program has made substantial progress over the last three years in building

towards a provincial prevention campaign. We are currently validating our campaign materials through a large clinical research study that should prove that public education can lower the incidence rate of SBS in this province and across the country.”

The most common symptoms of SBS are bleeding on the brain (subdural hematoma), massive brain swelling (cerebral edema) and bleeding inside the eye (retinal hemorrhages). The combination of these symptoms do not always appear together in

**Shaken Baby Syndrome is caused by shaking a baby usually out of frustration or anger.**

Shaking a baby can result in:

- Bleeding inside the eye; blindness
- Permanent brain damage
- Death

It is not caused by:

- Tossing a baby in the air
- Sudden stops in a car
- Bouncing a baby on your knee
- Short falls

every case, yet they are the most direct signs a child is suffering from SBS.

Since shaken baby syndrome can cause severe brain damage and blindness the survivors generally need continuing care throughout their lives.

“Brain injury can have devastating effects on the victim, as well as the family,” said Jerry Stanger, Director, Acquired Brain Injury Services for Fraser Health. “It is vitally important to prevent as many of these tragedies as possible. Toward this end, Fraser Health is pleased to join as a sponsor for the Second BC SBS Symposium.”

Through education and training, SBS can be prevented.

This symposium has the cooperation of international medical and legal experts offering the necessary training to strengthen local prevention efforts and programs protecting children from this abuse.

Registration is \$75 and includes lunch. For more information about the symposium and registration, please call Jocelyn Conway at 604-875-2000 ext. 5344 or e-mail [jconway@cw.bc.ca](mailto:jconway@cw.bc.ca). For additional registration information please go to [www.dontshake.com](http://www.dontshake.com) - ‘Upcoming Conferences’ information page.

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