

### 1. What is ICON?

ICON is a campaign to support parents/carers, providing them with information relating to ways of coping and managing a crying baby. ICON information is shared by health professionals with parents/carers, in the antenatal and postnatal periods by midwives, by health visitors and by GPs at the 6-8 week development check. Practitioners should take the opportunity, where they can, to be professionally curious about parental stresses and coping with a new-born baby. ICON is research based and proven to reduce the incidence of Abusive Head Trauma(AHT). Always record in the patient record when ICON has been discussed with the parent/carer and code appropriately. AHT affects >30 per 100,000 infants every year (one of the most serious forms of physical child abuse).

### 2. ICON is an acronym for:

**I**nfant crying is normal  
**C**omfort methods can help  
**I**t's **OK** to walk away  
**N**ever, Ever Shake a Baby

Babies start to **cry** more frequently from around 2 weeks of age. In the first month, the periods of crying will become longer. By 2 months of age, the crying may peak and periods of crying may become more frequent and last longer. After 2 months of age babies start to cry less each week. By 4-5 months, periods of crying will have decreased dramatically. A cry might signal many things; discomfort and startle are common examples. Sometimes, babies cry for no reason at all and sometimes they just cannot be settled. This may be upsetting for both baby and parent, but it causes no harm and will eventually cease.

### 3. Comfort methods can help

Advise parents/carers that **Comfort Methods** can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop. Babies can cry for different reasons; when they are hungry, wet/dirty or if they are unwell. Sometimes babies cry for no particular reason and a parent/carer needs to learn how to cope with this and can try some simple calming techniques. These techniques may not always work but parents need to understand that not every baby is easy to calm and that doesn't mean they are doing anything wrong and this is a phase that will pass.



### 4. Its OK to walk away

If the baby's crying is getting the parent / carer down, advise them **it's OK to walk away** . Advise them not to get angry with the baby or themselves. Instead, advise them to place baby in a **safe place** and walk away so they can calm down by doing something that takes their mind off the crying. Advise them, that after a few minutes, to go back and check on the baby. Parents/carers need to find time for themselves to help cope through what can be a stressful time. Advise them to stay calm, this phase will pass.

### 5. Never Ever Shake a Baby

Professionals need to inform parents/carers that handling a baby roughly, hurting, shouting, or getting angry with a baby will make things worse. Sometimes parents/carers get so angry and frustrated with a baby's crying they lose control and act on impulse and shake the baby. Shaking a baby is very dangerous and can cause lasting brain damage, life-long injuries or death. It is important for parents/carers to ensure that when leaving their baby in the care of anyone else, they also understand about how to cope with a crying baby.

### 6. When to worry about a baby crying?

If parents/carers are worried that the crying won't stop, advise them to speak with a health professional; GP or health visitor will be able to provide advice relating to baby crying/illness. Parents/carers can also contact a local pharmacy, NHS 111 or 999 in an emergency. Parents/carers should seek professional or medical help if they notice their baby has any of the following • A fit (seizure or convulsion) • Very high-pitched cry (doesn't sound normal) • Breathing is a struggle or noisy or unusually fast • Skin is greyish, mottled, blue or unusually pale • A rash that doesn't fade when you press a glass against it • High temperature that doesn't come down after giving the baby paracetamol.

### 7. Further information

Babies Cry, You Can Cope ([iconcope.org](http://iconcope.org))  
Leaflets/resources can be requested in alternative languages.

[Preventing Traumatic Head Injury in Babies by PHE in Partnership with ICON - YouTube](#)  
Video provided by ICON

[Ellis Story](#) Provided by ICON

Want to learn more? [Click here](#) and login with  
Username: ICON  
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