Discipline
Do Not Spank or Hit Your Child

It is normal to be upset when a child does not do what you want or annoys you. But even when you are angry, it is not okay to shake, hit or shame your child.

Children do not have to be hurt to learn. Hitting and yelling may stop what they are doing, but it tells them that it is alright to hit and hurt someone when you are angry. Hitting may cause children to feel helpless, ashamed and angry. That anger may be used against others later.

Instead of spanking or yelling you can:

- Deal with the problem right away, help your child understand what s/he did wrong
- Give your child a ‘time-out’; a ‘time-out’ gives you and your child a chance to calm down. It also gives you both time to think about what happened.
- Tell your child that you did not like what s/he did, but you still love them.
- Talk with your child about what to do the next time. This helps your child set his or her own limits
- Time-outs should not be used as punishment

Calm yourself:
You may get frustrated and angry with a crying baby. NEVER touch a baby in anger, try these things to calm yourself:

- Take your baby out of the house for a ride in a stroller or a car
- Leave your baby in a safe, secure place; go into another room and take deep breaths while counting to ten. Wait until you calm down
- Ask someone else you trust to watch your baby for you. This can be a parent, neighbor or a friend
- Seek counseling or help when needed. It is OK to ask for help; both you and your baby will be happier

What you can do when your baby cries
Plan what to do with your baby when your baby cries a lot. Here are some ideas:

- Breastfeed your baby, or give your baby a bottle or pacifier
- Change your baby’s diaper
- Rock your baby
- Walk with your baby
Dance or cuddle with your baby
Massage your baby

Your baby may not feel well
- Check to see if your baby is sick; check for a fever
- Check to see if your baby is teething; look for swollen gums

Learn about Shaken Baby Syndrome
People need to know how harmful it is to shake a baby. Babies are hurt badly when they are shaken. This is called Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and it often happened when a parent or caregiver tries to make a baby or young child stop crying. The adult gets angry or frustrated and shakes the baby. Shaking a baby can cause brain damage or even death.

Make sure you tell anyone who takes care of you baby or young child not to shake him or her. This includes friends and family friends, and babysitters and caregivers.

It is dangerous to shake a baby
Babies and young children up to age 5 have weak neck muscles. The muscles cannot support the head very well. When a baby is shaken, it hurts the baby’s brain, the brain slams against the skull wall. That can badly hurt a baby; one out of four babies with Shaken Baby Syndrome die from being shook.

A baby who is shaken can:
- Have difficulty talking and having learning disabilities
- Get cerebral palsy
- Become blind
- Have seizures
- Become mentally retarded
- Die

Get medical care right away if your child was shaken
- Take your child to the emergency room or your doctor
- Tell your doctor what happened, that way the doctor can give your child the best care

Don’t let guilt, fear or shame stop you
- Get care for your baby right away; it may save your baby’s life
- It may keep your baby from having serious health problems