

Shaken Baby Syndrome training held at JFS

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“Feeling rattled?” Never shake a baby!” those are the words that appear on an educational piece the Jewish Family Services’ (JFS) Help Me Grow (HMG) service coordinators will begin distributing to their clients following a Shaken Baby Syndrome session held recently at JFS. JFS Outreach worker and prevention specialist for Shaken Baby, Lisa Carroll, R.N., was the presenter.

The HMG program at JFS works with pregnant mothers, families, and children ages 0-5, who are experiencing developmental delay in one or more areas or who have a number of risk factors. Families are provided with early intervention services, including developmental screenings, family assessment, on-going support, education, and community referrals.

In the training with the HMG staff was Janice Zausman, R.N., and Dr. Ayalet Shles, from Kfar-Saba, Israel, who were in Columbus to learn about how to educate people in Israel about the dangers of shaking a baby. As a part of the Columbus Jewish Federation’s PK2 program that fosters relationships between Israelis and American Jews, Carroll and local pediatrician Dr. Judy Groner will visit Meir Hospital in Israel, March 19-31, to train staff about how to educate new parents and caregivers on the proper care of a crying baby. While in Columbus, Zausman and Shles helped Carroll translate her presentation into Hebrew that will be used by Israeli doctors and nurses. Carroll’s trip is being supported by a grant through the Judah Folkman Medical Research and education Endowment of the Columbus Jewish Foundation.

During the training, Carroll stressed the importance of telling young parents and caregivers that it is better to put a crying baby down in the crib or on the floor, on its back in a safe area, and walk away.

“Call a friend for help, take a shower, go into a bedroom, shut the door and breathe deeply to clam down. Crying is not going to hurt the baby, but an angry parent or caregiver who resorts to shaking can create severe and lasting damage,” said Carroll.

Sharon Snyder, who is also a nurse, attended the training with her adopted daughter, Charlotte, who was shaken as a baby. As a result, Charlotte suffered severe brain damage requiring round-the-clock care. Snyder, an SBS advocate, talked to the group about hospital costs associated with SBS, the care and ongoing and new injuries shaken babies sustain. She and her husband, Brett, decided to adopt Charlotte when they found she had been shaken in her previous environment.

Through Carroll’s work and persistence with Shaken Baby Syndrome, on Feb. 28 a Claries Law will go into effect. The law is named for the

daughter of Jon Fishbaugh, who was shaken by a babysitter eight years ago on the same date. This law will require maternity hospitals to educate moms before discharge, pediatricians, obstetricians, childcare workers, home visitation programs such as Jewish Family Services' HMG program and nurses who do visit homes. Ohio will be the first state in the country to have a reporting system to track actual cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome through the Department of Jobs and Family Services.

For more information about the Help Me Grow program, contact JFS HMG coordinator Julie Beatty at (614)559-0154, via e-mail at jbeatty@jpscolumbus.org or visit the JFS Web site at www.jpscolumbus.org.