

“When Your Baby Cries ... Ways to Soothe Your Baby” DVD
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“Incessant infant crying can make even the most experienced, competent parent feel frustrated, helpless, and angry. These feelings, which frequently are amplified by a lack of sleep that many new parents experience, can compromise the short- and long-term parent-child bonding process,” said Dr. Mary Carrasco, director of A Child’s Place at Mercy. “Crying is the most frequently cited trigger for abuse that leads to infant death and serious disability. Understanding that a certain percentage of babies cry, no matter what a parent does, can help parents deal with their feelings. The DVD provides parents with suggestions for what to do in those situations,” added Dr. Carrasco.

Hosted by Dr. Mike Forbes, a pediatric intensivist at Akron Children’s Hospital, “When Your Baby Cries” features real-life stories from Pittsburgh families who share personal experiences with infant crying, helpful tips from an experienced doula (a person who provides education and support to expecting and new parents before and after a birth), easy-to-follow demonstrations using proven techniques that can help calm a crying baby — including ways to hold the baby, swaddling, and the use of motion and sounds; a top-ten list that one mother created for others when watching her baby; and audio-only extras including vacuum cleaner noise and soothing music to calm a fussy baby.

The DVD was produced by The Fred Rogers Company for A Child’s Place at Mercy, part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System.

“Over the years, we have learned a great deal from Fred Rogers about how to use media to provide information to parents in ways that are sensitive to their needs,” said Margy Whitmer, the DVD producer and former producer of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. “While historically our focus has been on preschoolers, we were excited to have this opportunity to work with Dr. Carrasco, an internationally recognized expert in the field of child abuse treatment and prevention, and to reach out to parents of infants at a vulnerable time in their family’s life. This project is very much connected to our mission of supporting children and families and those who care for them.”

Funding for production was provided to A Child’s Place at Mercy by a grant from the Staunton Farm Foundation. Additional funding for community education was provided by McAuley Ministries, the Heinz Foundation, and the Highmark Foundation.

The DVD is part of the Infant Crying Project, a new A Child’s Place at Mercy’s prevention initiative designed to help prevent child abuse by providing additional education and support to families.

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The DVD’s release coincides with National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Physical abuse is the leading cause of serious head injury in infants, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Nationally, at least 1,400 children under the age of one year die from abuse, most often as a reaction to crying. Another 28,000 are permanently disabled from injuries related to abusive head trauma, formerly known as shaken baby syndrome. The roots of abuse vary by family and can include maternal depression, substance abuse, lack of parenting skills, and stress from poverty and unemployment. A cause forming a common thread across all cases of abuse, said Dr. Carrasco, is poor bonding between parent and child.

Parents delivering a baby at hospitals in Allegheny County will be eligible to receive a free DVD over the next year. DVDs will also be available for purchase. For online support and more information, check the website www.babycries.org. In addition, A Child’s Place at Mercy is developing a training curriculum it will use with health care and social services professionals, and others.

For more information about “When Your Baby Cries,” contact A Child’s Place at Mercy at 412.232.7200.

About A Child's Place at Mercy

A Child’s Place at Mercy, part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System and the official Allegheny County Child Advocacy Center, is an accredited member of the National Children’s Alliance. Its multi-disciplinary team has more than 75 years of combined experience in the evaluation of suspected abuse and has conducted or supervised more than 20,000 assessments. For more information about A Child’s Place at Mercy, visit www.pmhs.org and www.achildsplaceatmercy.org.

About Pittsburgh Mercy Health System

Pittsburgh Mercy Health System (PMHS) is an extension of the Catholic ministry to all people in southwestern Pennsylvania. A member of Catholic Health East and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, PMHS focuses on providing quality services that meet physical, mental and spiritual needs. Ministries include Mercy Behavioral Health, A Child’s Place at Mercy, Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Operation Safety Net®, St. Pius X Personal Care Home, and McAuley Ministries. To learn more, visit www.pmhs.org.

About The Fred Rogers Company

The Fred Rogers Company is a non-profit company that creates a wide range of materials dedicated to young children, their families, and those who support them. Founded by Fred Rogers to produce *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, it has expanded to design educational materials in many media that support healthy emotional, social and intellectual growth at all ages, and embody the philosophy and values of Fred Rogers. To learn more, visit www.fci.org.

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