



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jon Hanian

(208) 334-2100

### **PROCLAMATION CALLS ON IDAHOANS TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE**

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter signed a proclamation today declaring April "Child Abuse Prevention Month" in Idaho.

The Governor was joined at a signing ceremony by children's advocates who are highlighting the fact that Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is on the rise in Idaho and can be prevented. SBS is the leading cause of child abuse death in children under 1 year of age and the focus of this year's Child Abuse Prevention Month activities in Idaho.

"It is unfortunate that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are still talking about a problem that seems out of the middle ages. But we will continue to focus on preventing child abuse because the future of our society depends on it," Governor Otter said.

The Idaho proclamation coincides with local, state and national efforts to increase awareness of the work being done to prevent child abuse. Pinwheels – the national symbol of child abuse prevention – will be displayed throughout Idaho to symbolize the happy, healthy childhood all children deserve.

The Idaho Legislature recently passed a resolution stating that "a cultural change needs to take place in the way society comprehends infant crying in early infancy and the danger of shaking a baby as a result of this frustration, as crying is the number one trigger to shaking."

"I was pleased to listen to the organizations that want to prevent SBS in our state at the testimony before my committee," said Representative Sharon Block of Twin Falls, chairman of the House Commerce and Human Resources Committee. "The parents' testimony was especially compelling."

Hospitals throughout Idaho are providing information to new parents about proven methods for soothing crying babies and encouraging parents to walk away if necessary to calm their nerves. These programs have been highly effective throughout the country in reducing shaking incidents.

The Idaho Children's Trust Fund and Protect Idaho Kids are collaborating on a SBS prevention campaign called "Keep Your Cool" that includes a public service announcement to be shown on television stations around the state.

“Babies are innocent and defenseless,” said Brandi Whaley, founder of Shaken Baby Prevention of Idaho. Her daughter, Lauren, was badly injured as a result of being shaken by her childcare provider. “This could have been prevented had she known how dangerous shaking a baby can be. The only way to reduce the incidence of this unnecessary, preventable tragedy is through education.”

“Brandi’s grandmother brought this issue to my attention,” Representative Wendy Jaquet of Ketchum said. “I now know that with a little bit of coordinated education we can make a huge difference in preventing SBS.”

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