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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****NATIONAL INCREASES IN SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME MIRROR LOCAL CONCERNS**

*Southwest Human Development's Birth to Five Helpline Offers Arizona Parents Hope Before Frustrations Become Unmanageable*

**PHOENIX (July 8, 2010)** — Recent national reports indicate that cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome have increased by [55 percent](#) since the onset of the recession due to parents' increased financial and emotional stress. As a local non-profit that provides comprehensive developmental services for more than 135,000 local children and families, Southwest Human Development (SWHD) has witnessed the impact of this stress as calls have doubled to its Birth to Five Helpline within the past 12 months.

"The increase in calls has come from parents struggling with the added pressure of a job or insurance loss, increased debt, change in child care or living situation and other economic challenges," said Allison Steier, Southwest Human Development child development expert and long-time Helpline resource. "Through the Birth to Five Helpline, we serve as non-judgmental professionals who can take the time with parents expressing frustration and even fear concerning their child's behavior and help them understand that added stress can affect even their very young children."

The Helpline offers free, one-on-one child counseling for caregivers with concerns surrounding health and nutrition, language development, discipline and colic (inconsolable crying), potty training, tantrums and other child development topics. Calls to the Birth to Five Helpline are confidential and always involve a SWHD child development specialist, mental health expert, psychologist, or other professional who can provide reliable guidance and support.

"As a long-time community resource for frustrated parents in need of critical child development answers, the Birth to Five Helpline is a preventative measure to aid local families before they become a disturbing national statistic," said Ginger Ward, founder and CEO of Southwest Human Development. "When families become emotionally exhausted dealing with unexpected economic challenges, a crying baby or hard-to-manage toddler can make things feel impossible, and that is where the Helpline's child development specialists can step in and offer help and hope."

SWHD focuses on looking at each child's development individually before giving advice. Then Helpline professionals provide support and proven care strategies, as well as connecting parents to resources to help them move past their frustration and remain the loving, patient parent that they want to be. Created in 2004 as a resource for Arizona families, the Helpline is part of a larger preventative child abuse program to help parents cope with frustration before it becomes unmanageable.

To learn more about the Birth to Five Helpline please visit [www.swhd.org](http://www.swhd.org) or call 1-877-705-KIDS, Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Local individuals and corporations interested in volunteering or donating to essential programs like the Birth to Five Helpline are encouraged to contact SWHD and support this and other vital community programs at a time when local children and families need them most.

**About Southwest Human Development**

Founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization, Southwest Human Development provides comprehensive services for young children and their families in several areas: disabilities, early

literacy, child health and welfare, Head Start and professional training. Now serving 135,000 children and families each year, Southwest Human Development is the state's largest community-based organization of its type. In 2007, Southwest Human Development became the official Phoenix-area affiliate of Easter Seals. Easter Seals Southwest Human Development provides services to children and adults with disabilities and other special needs, and support to their families. In addition, CEO Ginger Ward was recently named one of the Valley's top 25 CEOs for 2010 by the *Phoenix Business Journal*. For more information on the non-profit's many services or donation and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.swhd.org](http://www.swhd.org).

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