

Baby Safe Surrender Campaign

Fact Sheet

“No Shame, No Blame, No Names”

Baby Safe Surrender’s New Campaign

- The new Baby Safe Surrender campaign will expand the program’s outreach to communities across Los Angeles County by launching in multiple languages, collaborating with community-based organizations and relying on a mix of traditional and grassroots awareness efforts.
- The program now includes:
 - A new website (BabySafeLA.org)
 - New outreach materials in English, Spanish, Chinese and Korean, available to everyone on the website
 - A comprehensive community outreach effort, which will involve several organizations to raise awareness about the program
 - A new ad campaign to spread the message that “There’s a Better Choice” for parents who cannot keep their baby

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law (SSBL)

- The state of California passed the Safely Surrendered Baby Law to give parents or guardians the choice to legally and safely surrender a baby three days old or younger with an employee at any Los Angeles County hospital or fire station, no questions asked.
- The parent or guardian may surrender the baby without fear of arrest or prosecution for child abandonment, as long as the child shows no signs of abuse or neglect.

The Baby Safe Surrender Program in Los Angeles County

- As of September 2013, 109 infants have been safely surrendered in Los Angeles County.
- While Baby Safe Surrender has seen a reduction in infant abandonment, there is still more work to be done. Since 2001, 71 infants have been found abandoned in Los Angeles County; 13 of these infants survived and 58 were found deceased.
- The last deceased baby was found on September 5, 2013 in a trash bin in El Monte.

How a Surrender Works

- Steps to Surrender a Baby:

- Anyone with lawful custody can go to a Safe Surrender site (at any Los Angeles County hospital or fire station) and give the baby to an employee within 72 hours of the baby's birth.
 - There is no need to call ahead
 - The baby can be surrendered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- The person surrendering the baby will be asked to voluntarily fill out a medical history form, which is useful in caring for the child. The form can be returned later and includes a stamped return envelope. No names are required.
- Surrendering individuals will obtain an I.D. bracelet that matches one that will be fastened to the baby's ankle. The bracelet will help them get the baby back if they change their mind (they have 14 days from the day of surrender). No other questions will be asked.
- After a complete medical exam, the baby will be released and placed in a safe and loving home, and the adoption process will begin.
- Families who want to adopt a safely surrendered baby must have a foster care license or certification and be approved to adopt. The requirements for adopting a child can be met through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or a local foster family agency that is also licensed as an adoption agency.

The ICAN Report: Debunking Myths about Surrendering Families

- As part of the recommendations approved in 2002, the Board requested that data on safely surrendered and abandoned infants be collected by ICAN – the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect – to monitor the effectiveness of SSBL in Los Angeles County.
- The report, which evaluated data across an 11-year period between 2002 and 2012, revealed that cases were not limited to specific areas of the County, at-risk communities, socioeconomic groups, or even age, ethnic background or sex. In fact there was no “profile” for surrendering families and mothers.
- The ICAN report is available upon request.

For more information on the Baby Safe Surrender program, the ICAN Report, or for parents to find information on how and where to surrender a baby in Los Angeles County, please visit: www.babysafela.org.