



No shame.

No blame.

No names.

Now there's a way to safely relinquish your newborn.

Illinois' Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act

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This kit, along with posters, brochures, order forms, and wallet cards are available free of charge by clicking "Teaching Tools" on the left nav bar at www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org.

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Dear Educator:

Illinois enacted the *Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act* (Public Act 92-0432), commonly referred to as a "Safe Haven law," in August 2001. The Safe Haven law allows a desperate parent to relinquish an unharmed infant legally, safely, and anonymously with no questions asked. This law has already been credited with saving the lives of dozens of newborns throughout Illinois.

Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27-9.1(c)(9) requires the Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act be included in all school health education classes. The Save Abandoned Babies Foundation and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services are pleased to provide this Teacher's Kit to assist you in meeting this requirement.

This Safe Haven Law Teacher's Kit is designed to help you educate your students about this law. Your assistance in sharing this information with teenagers may reduce the number of tragic stories of abandoned babies in Illinois. Sharing this information will also provide teens dealing with unwanted pregnancies an option that protects them from the severe consequences – both legal and emotional – of abandoning their babies.

As you review the enclosed materials, you will see that they have been designed to do more than simply communicate the facts about the Safe Haven law. These resources include challenging topics and activities you can use to enrich discussion and encourage critical thinking across the curriculum.

Thank you for including this important information about the Safe Haven law in your health education classes. Your commitment to the students of Illinois is very much appreciated. We invite you to share your comments about the Teacher's Kit by emailing info@SaveAbandonedBabies.org.

Save Abandoned Babies Foundation
www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org

SAFE HAVEN LAW CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This curriculum is designed to provide you with informative and easy-to-use classroom materials about Illinois' Safe Haven law.

Goals:

The goals of this curriculum include:

- Students are able to identify key facts about the Safe Haven Law
- Students understand possible reasons behind abandonment
- Students know resources to access and what they can do to help someone in danger of abandoning an infant
- Students think critically about larger issues including laws, ethics and personal responsibility
- Students integrate knowledge learned into different areas of the curriculum

Available Materials:

(See "Teaching Tools" on the left nav bar at www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org)

- Safe Haven pamphlet and posters (available In English, Spanish, and Polish)
- Order form from the Department of Children and Family Services for additional posters and brochures
- Wallet cards -- reproducible sheet intended to be copied onto heavy-weight paper stock and cut into wallet sized reference cards for students
- Black and white, and color 8 1/2 X 11 impact ads
- Safe Haven sign sample
- PowerPoint Presentation
- YOU Tube video clips

Lesson Plans:

- Core lessons
- Extension opportunities

Suggestions for Teaching

Unwanted pregnancies and abandoned babies may be difficult issues for your students. Talking about the Safe Haven law may evoke strong emotions or make some students feel uncomfortable. Here are a few tips to make your classroom discussions supportive and positive for your students:

- **Create a comfortable atmosphere.** Be open to what your students are saying and encourage them to listen to one another with respect and without interruption.
- **Encourage participation from all.** Review your classroom culture regarding differences of opinion and allowing other people to voice their ideas before you begin your discussions. Comments such as “good point,” “excellent ideas,” “great question,” or “a thoughtful response” may encourage more open dialogue.
- **Provide a variety of discussion formats.** Some students find it hard to express their views in a large group but might feel more comfortable speaking out in a smaller group.
- **Allow silence.** Silence can be valuable in allowing time for students to process information or collect their thoughts for a response. Try using a five second “wait time” between the time you ask a question and solicit a response.
- **Consult outside resources.** If there are questions you feel you don’t know the answer to, please feel free to contact us for help. Email to info@SaveAbandonedBabies.org.

Spreading the Word about Safe Havens

- Use key excerpts from the Safe Haven law resources in student bulletins, daily announcements, public service announcements on student radio and television stations, and on your school’s website. “*Tell a friend. Talk about it. You might save a life.*”
- Organize an informal “brown bag lunch” discussion for students who wish to talk further about the Safe Haven law together.
- Involve parents by inviting students to take the Safe Haven law student handouts home to share with their families.
- Inform fellow teachers, librarians, counselors, coaches and others who work with young people about the Safe Haven law.
- Make additional Safe Haven wallet cards and pamphlets available in the student services and nurse’s offices.

Core Lesson #1:

Facts about the Law

Objective:

- Students can identify key facts about the Safe Haven Law.

Materials:

- Copy of the following for each student:
 - Illinois' Safe Haven Law: Overview (pages 7 & 8)
 - Illinois' Safe Haven Law: Questions and Answers (pages 9 & 10)

Activities:

- Assign reading for homework or read together as a class, depending on student maturity and learning needs.
- Allow time for a class discussion of readings. Questions could include but are not limited to:
 - What did you learn about the law?
 - What are your general thoughts about the law?
 - What else do you want to know?
 -

Assessment:

- Have each student write a paragraph explaining what they learned about the law. The following 10 point rubric can be used:

Requirements (possible points)	Points Received
Introductory sentence (2 points)	
At least four facts about the Safe Haven Law (4 points)	
Concluding sentence (2 points)	
Overall clarity (2 points)	
TOTAL (10 points)	



ILLINOIS' SAFE HAVEN LAW: OVERVIEW

The Problem

From 1991 to 1998, the incidence of newborn abandonment in public places increased 62% across the country. Dramatic accounts in the newspapers and television underscored the problem. In March 1998, a baby was found by two 13-year old boys who saw a body floating in 14 feet of water in the California Aqueduct. The red-haired, 20-inch girl was tagged Baby Jane Doe No. 21 and given the name "Grace."

The Start of the Solution

Similar tragedies were occurring in other states. In Alabama, a pilot program attempted a new legislative focus: protecting the newborn at practically any cost. On September 1, 1999, Texas was the first state to pass a law allowing a parent to give up an infant anonymously. Other states began to follow with similar laws. Today, all 50 states have some form of a Safe Haven law.

In August 2001, the Illinois legislature passed the Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act (Public Act 92-0432). Similar to other states, Illinois' Safe Haven law allows a parent to safely relinquish an unharmed infant anonymously, without fear of prosecution.

The Law's Main Points and Conditions:

The intent of the Safe Haven law is to assure the safety of newborns that might otherwise be unsafely abandoned. The law provides a safe alternative to parents who may be under severe emotional distress or unable to provide for the basic needs of an infant.

- Allows a distressed birth parent(s) to legally, anonymously, and safely relinquish an unharmed newborn
- Provides a safe place for newborns
- Protects the parent(s) from arrest or prosecution for abandonment
- Does not require that names be given when the unharmed infant is safely relinquished
- Allows parents to safely relinquish an unharmed newborn up to 30 days old to a staff member at any hospital, police station, sheriff office, fire station, or emergency care facility in Illinois

- Allows the parent 60 days to reclaim the infant, subject to counseling and an inquiry by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. After 60 days, parental rights are terminated.
- Provides a resource packet for the parent containing information about adoption, a voluntary medical and family history questionnaire, and counseling information. The parent is not required to take this packet.
- Allows the relinquishing parent to voluntarily complete a medical and family history questionnaire for the newborn. This could be very useful for the child and the adoptive parents.



ILLINOIS' SAFE HAVEN LAW: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the Safe Haven law?

It is a law that allows a parent to legally and safely relinquish their unharmed newborn anonymously without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment, with no questions asked.

No shame, no blame, no names.

How does it work?

Parents who are unable or unwilling to care for an infant can legally, anonymously, and safely relinquish their unharmed newborn up to 30 days old. The only requirement is that the unharmed newborn be brought to a hospital, a fire station, police station, sheriff office, or an emergency care facility in Illinois, and handed to any staff member.

Can only a parent bring in the newborn?

In most cases, a parent will bring in the infant. The law allows another person to safely relinquish the unharmed newborn if the person has lawful custody, or is acting on behalf of the parent.

Does the parent have to call before bringing in the newborn?

No. A parent can safely relinquish an unharmed newborn anytime, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. The Safe Haven law is good 24-7.

Does a parent have to say anything to the person taking the newborn?

No. Nothing is required. The parent can walk away with no questions asked. A packet of information is available to the parent but the parent is not required to accept it. This packet contains information about adoption, a medical/family history form that can be filled out and mailed in anonymously, written notice of the process to terminate parental rights, and a list of local resources.

What happens to the newborn?

The newborn will be examined and given medical treatment if needed. (If the examining doctor determines the newborn has been harmed, the parent could be prosecuted.) The newborn will be placed in a pre-adoptive home.

What happens to the parent?

Once the infant has been safely relinquished, the parent is free to go. Nothing happens to the parent.

What if a parent wants the newborn back?

Under the Safe Haven law, a parent who has safely relinquished an unharmed newborn has 60 days to petition the court to prevent the termination of parental rights and regain custody.

Why is Illinois doing this?

The purpose of the Safe Haven law is to save the lives of newborns and keep them from being unsafely abandoned. This law provides a safe and legal alternative to parents who may be under severe emotional distress or are unable to provide for the basic needs of an infant.

Will the Safe Haven law prevent any more newborns from being abandoned?

The intent of the law is to assure the safety of unwanted newborns that might otherwise be unsafely abandoned, though it's hard for a law to change the way a very frightened person may act. Between August 2001, when the law was first passed in Illinois, and August 12, 2009, 56 babies have been unsafely abandoned; 27 of them did not survive. During this same time frame, another 53 newborns were safely relinquished in Illinois under the terms of the Safe Haven law.

Core Lesson #2:

Reasons for Abandonment and What You Can Do

Objective:

- Students understand possible reasons behind abandonment
- Students know resources to access and what they can do to help someone in danger of abandoning a newborn

Materials:

- Copy of the following for each student:
 - Reasons for Abandonment (page 12)
 - Resources (page 13)
 - What Would *You* Do? (page 14)

Activities:

- Read through "Reasons for Abandonment" and "Resources" as a class.
- Pass out "What Would *You* Do?" and read through the description of the activity. Break students up into pairs and give them time to complete the task of role playing.
- Bring the group back together and discuss the following questions:

Methods of persuasion:

- What were the key facts you used to try to convince the parent to safely relinquish the newborn?
- How did you overcome any fears or objections voiced by the parent?
- Was your argument to the parent mainly emotional or rational? Why?

Parent's concerns:

Most mothers who abandon their newborns keep their pregnancy secret, give birth in private and then "get rid of the problem."

- Why is the parent afraid?
- What assurances does the parent need?
- What are the parent's long term and short-term needs?
- Why can't you solve the parent's problem?
- Give students an opportunity to role play one more time after the group discussion. If time allows, discuss how the role play differed after the discussion.

Assessment:

- Determine students' ability during role playing and class discussion to appropriately identify reasons why parents' may choose unsafe abandonment, and resources for how to help.



REASONS FOR ABANDONMENT

Why do parents abandon newborns?

Babies have been abandoned for many reasons:

- Mother denies pregnancy, keeps it a secret, gives birth in private and abandons or kills the newborn
- Mother's husband is not the father
- Mother fears she doesn't have enough money to care for the infant
- Mother has other children, can't afford to take care of another
- Mother is afraid or ashamed to tell her parents or others who could help
- Mother is afraid of being abused if the pregnancy/newborn is discovered
- Mother is afraid of the humiliation of having a baby out of wedlock
- Pregnancy discovered too late
- Infant is the result of rape or incest
- Mother fears social services will take away her other children
- Mother fears an ex-spouse will take her other children

Some parents who have experienced any of these circumstances may have been under severe emotional distress. Because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn for help, the parents unsafely abandoned their newborn.

Is the Safe Haven law the only answer?

No. The parent may wish to consider either a traditional adoption or an open adoption where records are kept and the possibility of future contact with the child is maintained. If a parent wants to keep the newborn but thinks they cannot afford to care for the infant, public assistance and food stamps may help. If a woman is afraid of abuse, the National Domestic Violence Hotline can help her. If a young girl is afraid of her parents, she can contact the Family Services Agency in her county or community for help and counseling. The health of the mother and the baby will both be protected if the mother receives medical care before the baby is born. The following sheet lists several resources that can help.



RESOURCES

THESE NUMBERS CAN HELP:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)

Child Help USA (Abuse Hotline)

1-800-422-4453

Safe Haven Crisis Line

1-888-510-BABY (1-888-510-2229)

Save Abandoned Babies Foundation

312-440-0229

www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org

Tell a friend. Talk about it. You might save a life.

Public Assistance and Food Stamps

For more information, contact your local county welfare department

REACH OUT AND TRUST SOMEONE

You may know of someone who is pregnant and worried. If your friend is unwilling to talk directly to her parents, encourage her to talk to someone who is knowledgeable about the services and resources available in your community and someone who will be helpful and supportive. School counselors, social workers, nurses, and teachers can help.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Using Your Powers of Persuasion

In this activity, your goal is to convince a fearful teenager to safely relinquish an unwanted newborn using the Safe Haven law rather than unsafely abandoning the infant. Review the Safe Haven law Q&A Handout to learn the facts you need to make a compelling argument.

Role-play with a partner

One partner takes the role of the distressed parent. The other partner is a friend who wants the parent to consider safely relinquishing the newborn at a designated Safe Haven. Spend several minutes playing these roles, then reverse roles and repeat the exercise. When you've completed this exercise, discuss the key points raised by the fearful teen, and the friend's response. Discuss the different outcomes, and who the teen could turn to for additional help.

Core Lesson #3:

Critical Thinking about the Law

Objective:

- Students think critically about larger issues including laws, ethics and personal responsibility

Materials:

- Copy of the following for each student:
 - Critical Thinking about the Law (page 16)

Activities:

- Give students 10-15 minutes to read the questions on the form and write down their answers.
- Allow time for a class discussion of the questions. Submit suggestions for making the law better to the Save Abandoned Babies Foundation at info@SaveAbandonedBabies.org.

Assessment:

- Assess, in discussion and in students' written responses, if they are able to critically think about this law.



CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT THE LAW

The Safe Haven law allows a desperate parent to safely relinquish an unharmed infant without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment. The law does not require that names be given when the newborn is safely relinquished. Parents are allowed to hand an unharmed newborn up to 30 days old to any staff member at any hospital, police or fire station, sheriff office, or emergency care facility in Illinois. The infant will be placed in a pre-adoptive home. Take a few minutes to think about why this new law is a good idea for Illinois.

- How does the Safe Haven law help an unwanted newborn?
- How does it help the newborn's parents?
- Does this law also help other people? If so, who are they and how do they benefit?
- Can you think of any negative things about this law? If so, what are they?
- Are there ways to make the law better? How?

Make brief notes about your answers to these questions and prepare to share your ideas during a discussion with other students in your class.

EXTENSION OPPORTUNITIES

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING OPTIONS

While the topics in this kit correlate naturally with health education, the Safe Haven law can be related to several subject areas. Try the following ideas to make these curriculum connections:

Fine Arts & Language Arts: Your students may be inspired to create posters, artwork, poems and music that depict themes and emotions related to the goals and successes of the Safe Haven law. See related activities on the Additional Projects Sheet.

Social Studies, Citizenship and Law: Use the Safe Haven law to introduce a discussion of the purpose and practice of state law generally. See related activities on the Additional Projects Sheet.

Life Skills: Encourage students to think about how the Safe Haven law may impact a teen who gives up an infant under this law. See related activity on the Student Critical Thinking Sheet.

Mathematics: Practice statistics skills using national estimates provided about abandoned babies at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/abandon.htm>. See related activity on the Additional Projects Sheet.



ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT TOOK TO CREATE THE LAW

Citizens and lawmakers in Illinois wanted to assure the safety of newborns from being unsafely abandoned. This is the idea that led to the Safe Haven law in Illinois enacted August of 2001.

What did it take to turn a good idea into a law in our state?

Use these ideas to research and answer this question:

- Use online and print resources in your library to investigate how laws are introduced and passed in Illinois.
- Contact the office of your local state representative(s) for information or materials.
- Present your findings by writing a step-by-step list of the law-making process, or create a flowchart that clearly illustrates this process.
- Include any interesting facts you find about how the Safe Haven law was enacted, later expanded to include police stations as Safe Havens, and to change the time that a parent may safely relinquish a newborn from 3 to 7 days, and then again from 7 days to the current 30 days.
- Additional legislation was passed requiring public schools to include the Safe Haven law in school health education curriculum. Why do you think this legislation was considered necessary?

EXPRESSING YOUR FEELINGS

You may experience many emotions as you learn about the challenges and successes of the Safe Haven law. An unwanted pregnancy and giving up a newborn are likely to cause anxiety, loneliness, and sadness. On the other hand, a newborn safely placed with a loving new family is an occasion for celebration, hope, and happy anticipation.

- Use your talents to express an emotion you feel about the Safe Haven law.

- Ideas: draw a picture, compose a song, write a poem to an infant safely relinquished under the Safe Haven law, or simply write your thoughts in your personal journal. If you wish, share what you create with your classmates.

FIGURING IT OUT

Use your math skills to answer these questions:

- In 1998, 105 newborns were abandoned in public places in the United States. Thirty-three (33) of these newborns were found dead. What percentage of these newborns were found alive?
- Conduct a survey of students in other grades to determine their awareness of the Safe Haven law. Determine the percentage of students who know the law exists and ask follow up questions to assess the accuracy of the information students have about the law. Use your survey results to prepare a report on student knowledge of the Safe Haven law.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Working with a group of classmates, design an awareness campaign that will publicize the existence of Illinois' Safe Haven law.

- *Consider the following questions:*
 - Who is the primary audience for the message? What types of media would you use to reach your audience?
 - What are the essential elements of the message you are trying to convey? What would be the annual advertising budget for the Safe Haven awareness campaign?
- *Consider the following options:*
 - Design a bulletin board for your classroom or hallway to inform other students about the "No Shame, No Blame, No Names" Safe Haven law to safely relinquish an unharmed newborn.
 - Use this topic as a school service project. Contact your local police, fire station and hospital to make sure they are aware of the law. Discuss ways to bring awareness to your community.
 - Posters, bumper stickers, billboards, radio ads, TV spots, etc.
 - Create a slogan, choose music and write a strong, clear message. Consider creating a PowerPoint presentation.
- When your work is complete, work with your group to present your campaign effectively to the rest of the class, or your entire school.



COMPARISON OF STORIES OF SAFE RELINQUISHMENT/ABANDONMENT

Read the following four scenarios and compare them. Think about:

- How the Infant was left
- What the ultimate result was

SCENARIO #1

In early March 2006, a healthy newborn baby was brought to a regional medical center under the provisions of the Illinois Safe Haven law. A few hours earlier, a young woman had called the hospital and said, "I want to relinquish my baby under the Safe Haven law." This parent and newborn are protected under Illinois' Safe Haven law. As the law states, the baby's mother did not have to identify herself. When the baby was brought to the emergency room, he was examined by a pediatrician and was healthy and doing fine. He was placed in a pre-adoptive home while the adoption process was started. The mother was offered a packet of information and a medical/family history form she could voluntarily complete and send back anonymously. She left the hospital.

No shame, no blame, no names.



SCENARIO #2

Police were trying to find the parent of a newborn infant found by a garbage can. The fully clothed baby, estimated to be two to three hours old, was found wrapped in a blanket. A neighbor heard the baby crying and found her wedged between the handle of the garbage can and a wall.

The baby was taken to an area hospital. A nursing supervisor at the hospital said the baby was in good condition. Police talked to neighbors and followed up on any tips that came in.

The Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act, also known as the Safe Haven law grants parents immunity from criminal prosecution if they safely relinquish their unharmed infant up to 30 days old to personnel at a designated Safe Haven. In Illinois, Safe Havens include police stations, fire stations, sheriff offices, hospitals and emergency care facilities.



SCENARIO #3

Dressed in a tiny tee shirt that read "My First Halloween," a newborn baby was brought to a suburban fire station where he was safely relinquished by his mother under the provision of Illinois' Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act, also known as the Safe Haven law. The mother brought the healthy baby boy, along with formula and extra diapers, to a fire station. The baby was transported to a local hospital for a checkup and was placed in a pre-adoptive home. The mother was offered a packet of information, including a medical history for the baby she could complete and return anonymously. She left the fire station with no questions asked and no fear of prosecution.



SCENARIO #4

The custodian of a church was making certain everything was in order for the many services and activities planned for Christmas week when he found something quite unexpected. As he opened the door of a seldom used reception hall, he thought he heard kittens meowing. As he investigated the soft noises, he was surprised to find newborn twins, wrapped in blankets and tucked into a large box next to the radiator in the hall. The custodian, still amazed by his discovery, said the babies must have recently been placed there as they were warm, their diapers dry, and they seemed to have been fed. The police were called, and the babies transported to an area hospital. Local authorities attempted to locate the parents of the babies and asked area residents for assistance.

These babies have much to be thankful for. The hall in which they were left is not ordinarily heated or used. It could have been many days before the babies were found. Churches are not Safe Havens under the law as they are not open 24/7 and staff is not readily available to accept a newborn. These twins were not safely relinquished as defined by the Safe Haven law, but fortunately, found alive. The parent was sought out for unsafe abandonment, and the babies placed in the foster care system.