

For more information about Safe Havens, call:

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Office for Children and Families

1.866.886.3537

# OHIO's SAFE HAVENS FOR NEWBORNS

AN ALTERNATIVE TO LEAVING  
INFANTS IN UNSAFE PLACES



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Office of Communications  
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## What is Safe Havens for Newborns?

Not all women who get pregnant are ready to raise a child. Sometimes they see no options except to abandon the baby. Safe Havens provides a new option. It allows a birth parent to leave a newborn infant (up to 30 days old) with:

- a **medical worker** in a hospital;
- a **medical worker** at a fire department or other emergency service organization; or
- a **peace officer** at a law enforcement agency.

If the infant is left with a person at one of these places, and has not been abused or neglected, the parent will face no legal consequences for making this choice.

## Who can take a newborn to a Safe Haven?

The birth parent (mother or father) can take a child to a Safe Haven. The law provides protection from prosecution only for the child's parents.

## Does the birth parent have to call before taking an infant to a Safe Haven?

No. A birth parent may take a newborn to a Safe Haven at any time until the child is 30 days old.

## What information will the birth parent have to provide?

The birth parent is not required to provide any information, including his or her name. However, it would help the baby if the birth parent chose to provide basic health information. The birth parent will be offered a form to guide them in providing the most important health information.

## What happens next?

If the baby needs medical attention, it will be provided. The professional staff person who accepts the baby will contact the county children services agency, and the baby will be placed in an adoptive home. There are many families who want to adopt a baby.

When a parent cannot care for an infant, leaving the baby at a Safe Haven may be the best choice for the child. If the birth parent is not sure about this decision, an adoption social worker can help by providing information on available options and services for birth parents and their babies. Information is also available by calling:

**HELP ME GROW**  
**1-800-755-4769**

Any birth parent who wants to raise a baby but doesn't know how may also call the Help Me Grow helpline to get information about caring for and raising children.