



Parenting in NICU

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Parents and caregivers are an important part of the care team. We want you to feel comfortable in the unit and we want you to be involved in your baby's care. Your presence here is very important and we value your thoughts and opinions. Parenting in NICU is not impossible, it's just different, and the team will work with you to make sure you are comfortable parenting while you are here.

Here are some tips for parenting in NICU:

1. Find a balance between home and hospital. This can be tricky, especially if you have other children. Do your best to explain and help them understand. Always remember, you're doing the best you can.
2. Take care of yourself so you can take care of your baby. Eat, sleep, get fresh air, get some exercise. Ask the people that support you to help by making meals for you, prepaying parking, looking after your home, looking after your other children so that you can be fully present for your baby.
3. It can be scary to touch and handle your baby at first. Work with your bedside nurse to learn about your baby's cues and how to safely handle your baby.
4. Participate in rounds. This is your opportunity to discuss the daily care plan with the team. At first it may be difficult. We understand and will help you. We value anything you may have to say. Ask the staff if you do not understand anything the team may say.
5. Talk, read, sing to your baby. Do Kangaroo Care when your baby is well enough.
6. Take one day at a time. Sometimes parents can be overwhelmed with fear and the unknown. Focus on today.

How will I cope?

Coping with this time in NICU can be hard. We will do what we can to help you find the support you need. We take care of the whole family, not just the baby.

These are some concerns many parents and caregivers face:

- Someone to care for their other children.
- Finding a way to get to the hospital.
- Dealing with their own health.
- Concerns about other family members.

You can feel free to talk to your baby's nurse or Social Work, or any staff member about any concerns or questions you may have.

Sometimes talking to other parents in the unit helps. A weekly casual drop-in for families is hosted by a former NICU parent, Spiritual Health and Social Work.

We also have Veteran NICU Parent Volunteers who are willing to listen and help you with your NICU journey. Veteran Parents understand your journey because they have lived it too.

Remember: we are here to help.

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