

# Parents' Involvement Template: A Tool to Standardize Caregivers' Approach to Parents In NICU

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## Background

Preterm babies and their parents face a long and often complex journey in the newborn intensive care unit (NICU) from admission to discharge. As the parent-baby triad is the core of family centered care, parents should be welcomed in the NICU, integrated, and involved in their baby's care. NICU staff should support parents in recognizing their baby's needs and in acquiring parenting skills. This approach could help to promote and establish the bonding between parents and babies, despite obstacles due to early separation and admission to the NICU. Welcoming the parents of hospitalized babies in the NICU is always an important step in a continuous and multidisciplinary process. The nurse becomes the facilitator in the relationship within the triad. To the best of our knowledge, no studies described qualitatively structured parents' involvement templates to be used in the NICU, but rather checklists that report the knowledge and skills that parents should acquire during the hospitalization of their baby.<sup>1,2</sup> Welcoming parents in the NICU has a dual function: it offers parents the opportunity to learn and understand their baby's cues and supports professionals to guide them during their journey until the discharge.<sup>3</sup>

## Aims

Developing a specific and structured parent involvement template has two aims. First, to standardize the approach of the NICU professionals to the care of the babies; second, to support the parents in the process of acquiring their parental skills before discharge and to measure their level of self-efficacy (Table 1).

## Methods

The standardization of NICU professionals' behavior is assessed by identifying the number of professionals who fill out the parents' involvement template. The level of parental self-efficacy is monitored through a specific tool (PMP S-E).<sup>4,5</sup>

## Results

The standardization of NICU professionals' behavior reduces the disparities and promotes a family centred approach to the care of babies and families. The active involvement of parents in the care of their baby during hospitalization facilitates and promotes parental early self-efficacy before discharge, greater self-confidence in their parental skills, and a reduction in the risk of subsequent hospitalizations.

## Relevance to NIDCAP and Conclusion

The parents' involvement template should become a central tool of NICU care for preterm infants, and it supports the implementation of family-centered, NIDCAP-oriented care.

Table 1. Parents' Involvement Template

Birth date	GA at birth	Birth weight
Welcoming		<b>Check in</b> - information - Leaflet - Locker
Date first contact		
Parents Interaction		
Kangaroo Care (KC)	- Duration - Clothing - Mirror - Book - Breastfeeding promotion	<b>Not done due to:</b> - Baby's clinical condition - Absent parents - Parents' difficulties
Date KC		
Parents Involvement		
Nappy (diaper) changing	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
Abdomen assessment - touch - stooling	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
Feeding - Tube - Bottle - Breast	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
Hygiene practice - Sponging - Bath	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
Special Needs Babies		
Tracheostomy	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
Gastrostomy	- Caregiver - Caregiver/Parent - Parent	
DISCHARGE	- Self-efficacy complete - Self-efficacy incomplete	Notes

(references on p. 9)