

Transitioning Your Baby Home From the NICU

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October 25, 2018

Parents transitioning their premature babies home find their anxiety levels rising right before NICU discharge. Not only are they taking a premature baby home, but possibly a heart monitor, multiple medications, an overload of information that may or may not be coordinated in a notebook, and much verbal instructions pertaining to the baby, follow-up appointments to get parents out the door.

Therapy or developmental aspects that are very important elements in your child's life once he/she is home in a new environment. The parents are overwhelmed as now, they don't have the comfort of having health professionals at their home (or bedside) to answer questions they have concerning their baby. There is often a disconnect or gap in therapy service time until community services are started in the home.

Occupational Therapists help adapt/modify stimulation that premature infants are exposed to and help develop sensory modulation and equilibrate wake-sleep cycles. OT's can help parents to be completely involved in sensory input by way of tactile, proprioceptive and vestibular stimuli. OT's are helpful in coaching parents how to perform Range of Motion, infant massage, promoting better muscle tone, visual focus and social communication within the infant's environment.

Once parents bring their baby home from the NICU, OT's can recommend how to adapt the home environment to meet both the baby's and parent's needs to decrease stress and have essential tools necessary to respond to the infant's needs.

OT's have much experience in explaining and coaching parents to understand the importance of maintaining good homeostatis (calmness of baby's nervous system) through flexion/containment/midline, teach and coach on tummy time and how Safe Sleep practices are so crucial to baby's safety and development.

Most NICU's do have therapy involved with the baby's prior to discharge. If there aren't enough staffed therapists or the baby/parents are only provided with minimal teaching, most parents will not remember what they are taught. Usually there is a gap in therapy services that range from 4 weeks to 4 months post discharge date.

Early Developmental Therapy Services provides help with the transition from NICU to home and coaches parents on how to help their baby while awaiting community services. This is

done through Telehealth website posted below. Parents should not have the added extra stress of feeling alone during this crucial time...[EDTC is here to help.](#)