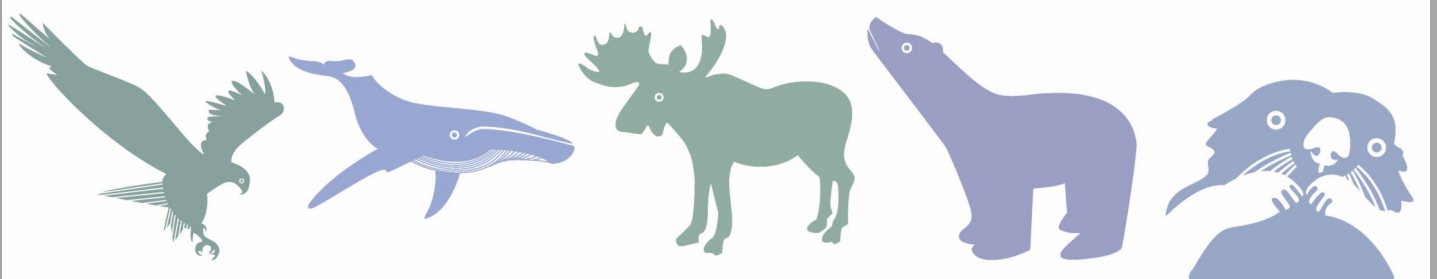
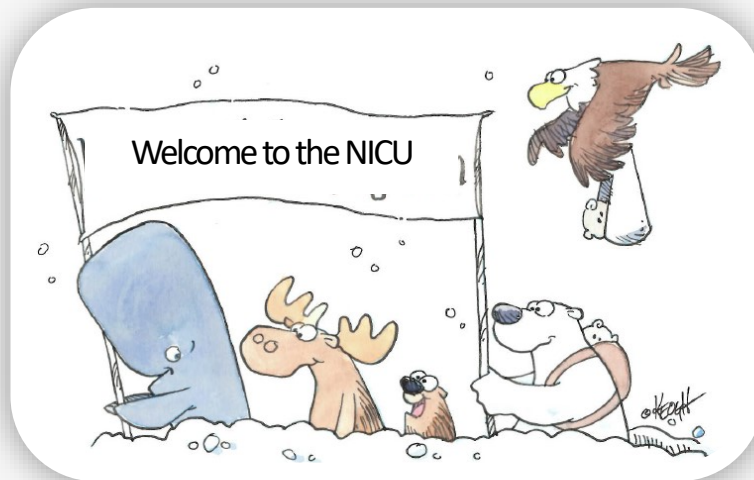


A Look Inside the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



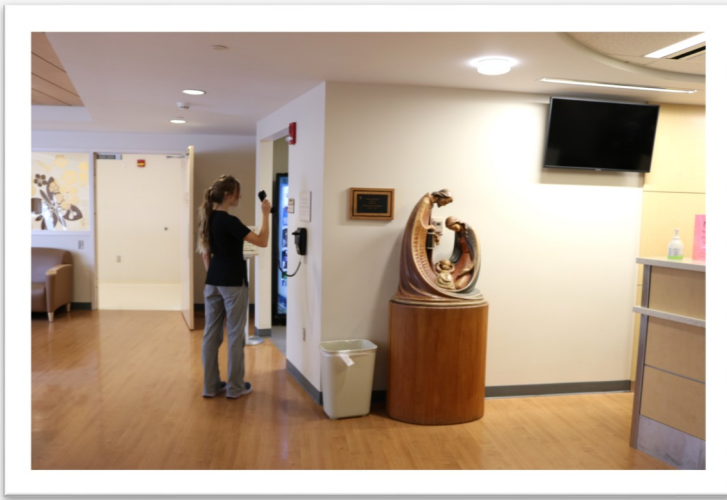


Since 1976, our NICU has taken excellent care of thousands and thousands of babies. We are a level III unit with 66 bed spaces.



Our newest addition opened in April of 2013 with private rooms and state-of-the-art technology, designed to support you and your baby.





With every door in the unit locked, our greeter will buzz open the doors for you to enter and leave the unit. Proceed to the NICU front check-in desk. We may ask to see Photo ID, please be prepared.

The NICU has five hallways with 10 rooms in each hallway. At least two rooms in each hallway are designed for multiples.



When you have a baby in the NICU, the baby is handed to us from Labor and Delivery via the pass-through window. Mom's will be wheeled back in a bed or wheelchair as soon as they are stable after delivery.



We all work hard to get you and your baby together again.

Courtesy lockers are provided for all guests to store their personal belongings like purses, bags and coats.



Parents - Make sure you are always wearing your assigned parent badge. It helps us recognize who you are.

Prior to entering any patient hallway, a 2-minute scrub is required. This scrub is repeated every 6-hours or when you've left and come back to the hospital.



Above the sinks, TV screens provide unit information. The screens run on a 2-minute loop. The screen you start washing on is the screen you will end on.

Long hair should be pulled back, all jewelry on hands and wrists removed and sleeves should remain up above the elbow the entire time you're in the NICU.



We provide common spaces for parents and their guests to eat, relax and visit. Lockers are provided for parents to store food items. Please no food in the baby's room.



Sun room sitting areas are available 24/7 - *even during change of shift* - for use by all parents and guests. They are located at the end of the Bear, Moose and Whale hallways.

There are 6 bathrooms located on the unit. Four shower/bathroom combos are located off the parent lounge. Two additional bathrooms are located at the end of the Bear Den and Whale Pod hallways.



For your convenience, wash cloths and towels are located in cubbies outside the restroom/shower combos.



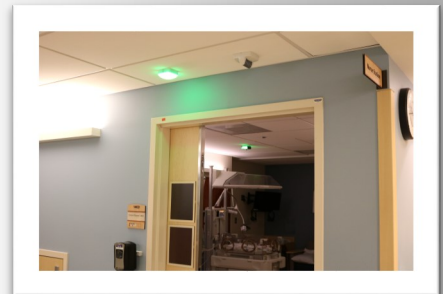
Laundry machines are free of charge for NICU family use. Just provide your own detergent, or purchase from the coin operated dispenser.

The door key can be checked out from the check-in desk.

Quiet Voices and green lights are best for each and every baby.

Rooms are designed to meet the developmental needs of every baby. Protecting their eyes and ears is important for current and later development.

We use a sound system called Sonicu.



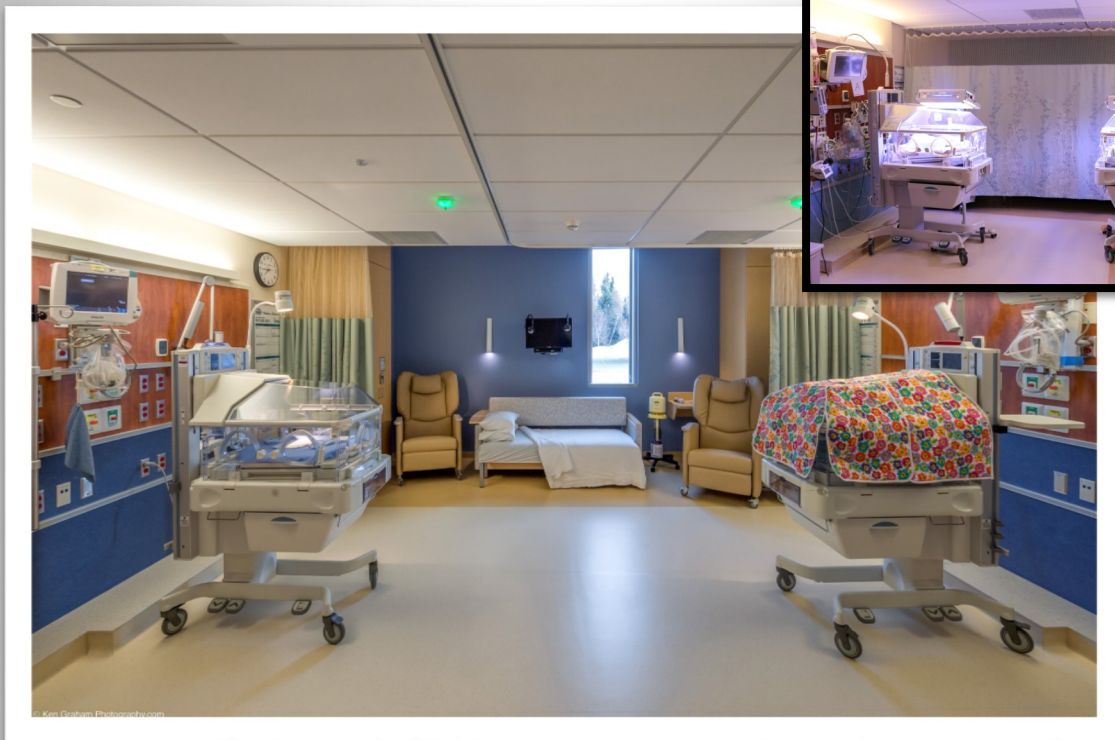
A light box in the baby's room will change from green to yellow to red, depending on the noise levels. This is a gentle reminder to all in the room to keep voices and noise very low. Special ceiling tiles, wooden doors, rubberized flooring help to minimize sound levels. We also ask for headphones to be used when watching television.

Controlled lighting in the individual rooms and hallways allow us to protect sensitive eyes. Educational signs, posted above the light switch, explain lighting needs by gestational age.

Please silence all cell phones before entering the unit.



Televisions, breast pumps, kangaroo care chairs, private wardrobe lockers, breast milk refrigerators, and communication boards provide comfort and convenience for parents.



We have two different sized rooms for multiples. The larger of these rooms may be used as semi-private rooms if the unit reaches capacity.

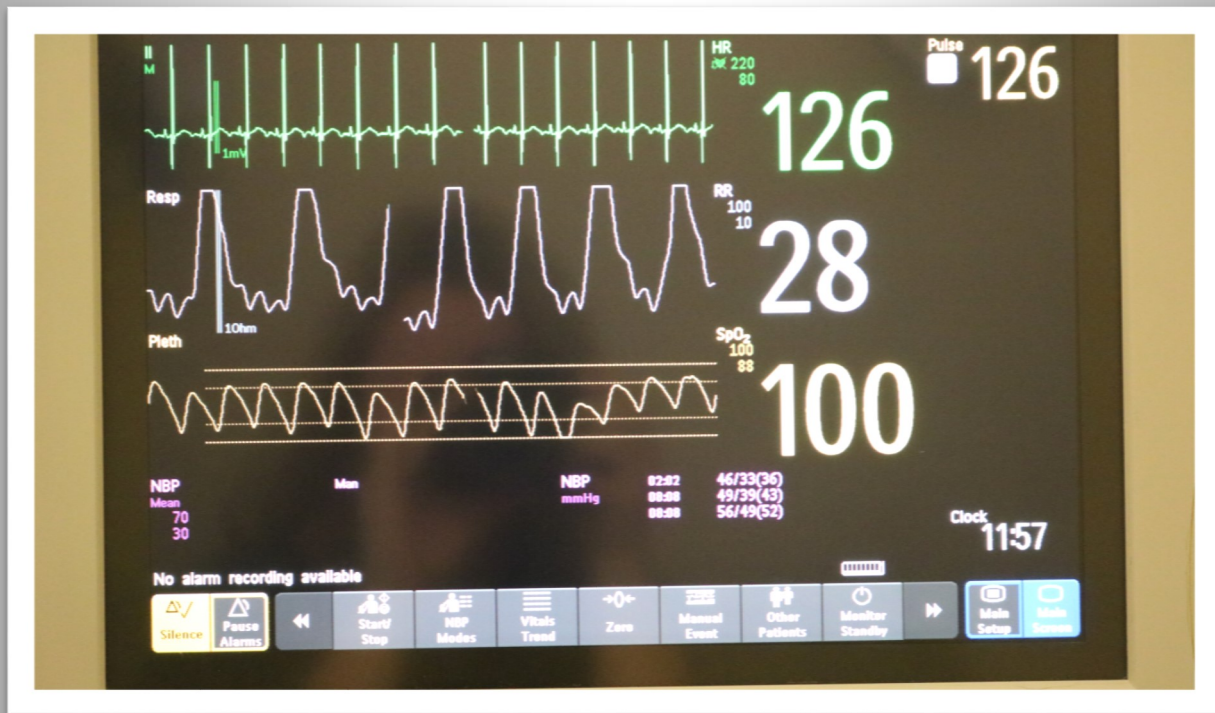
Each room is designed to support parents staying with their baby 24/7.

Rooms may become crowded with medical equipment, which is why we limit the number of people in the room to four.



From 6:30 PM—8:00 PM, we may ask that only parents be in their baby's room. Parents may designate one additional person to be in the hospital after 9 p.m. Please communicate this information to the bedside nurse so hospital entry is possible.

Monitors in each room tell our caregivers about the status of each baby. Nurses have this information in the hallway and on their phones. We hope these features give you peace of mind. We are informed about your baby's well-being even if we are not in the room.



This monitor shows the following:

- The top green line is the baby's heart rate
- The heart rate is also shown in yellow in the upper right corner
- The middle white line shows the respiratory rate or breaths per minute that the baby is taking.
- The bottom yellow line is the baby's oxygen or O₂ saturation - the amount of oxygen in the baby's blood

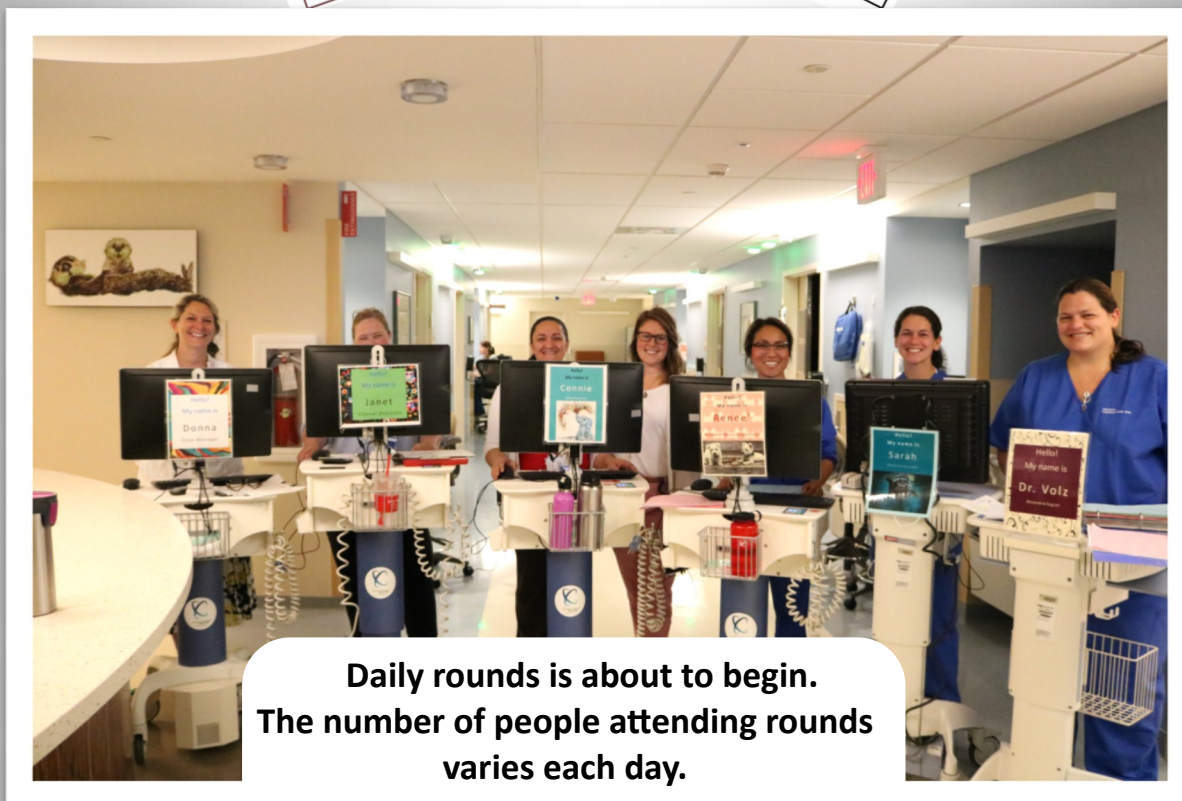
Monitors are adjusted and customized depending on what the nurse and provider wish to see. This is only one example of what a monitor screen may look like.

The NICU has a very large staff which means many people are caring for your baby from shift to shift. This makes communication vital. Help us know about your family by using these two tools:

The image shows two forms used in a NICU. The first form, titled 'Newborn Intensive Care Unit', is a comprehensive care plan. It includes contact information for Children's Hospital at Providence (907-562-2211), the unit name, and the room number (1501-01). It has sections for 'YOUR CARE TEAM' (Nurse, Physician or neonatal nurse practitioner, Family contact information), 'BABY INFORMATION' (Weight, Length, Last bath, Bed change, Personal items), 'GOING-HOME CHECKLIST' (24-hour care, Car seat, CPR class, Education videos, Hearing screen, Howsyourbaby.com, Immunizations, Medication, Milk preparation, Orientation), and 'PHONE NUMBERS' (Charge nurse 22840, NICU manager 25006, Parent navigator 22658, Social worker 24841). A 'Care schedule' column on the right lists times from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The second form, 'All About Our Family', is a family information sheet. It includes sections for 'Our family includes...', 'Our family lives...', 'We will be with our baby...', 'We communicate best by...', and 'Would like you to know...'. It features a cartoon eagle and other animals at the bottom.

Whiteboards and the All About Our Family forms help us learn about you and your family so that we can do our best to support your needs and the needs of your family.

The medical team “rounds” on your baby every day. Parents are important members of the team, therefore, we encourage you to be present and participate in rounds, each day, at the level you choose. Your rest is important too, so let us know if you wish to not be woken for rounds.



**Daily rounds is about to begin.
The number of people attending rounds
varies each day.**

**Name signs on the computers help
parents know who is who.**



We have **Occupational, Physical, and Speech therapy**. Our dedicated therapists work to support the unique developmental needs of your baby.

When ready, your baby may even get playtime on the mat!





Child Life Specialists are involved in many areas in the NICU, including parent support, assisting with patient eye exams and infant massage.

They work with siblings to prepare them for the NICU environment **BEFORE** they meet their new brother or sister.

Please call 907-212-8216 to schedule an appointment.

Child Life will meet with you and your child(ren) to help ensure that the first meeting is wonderful for the entire family.

There may be medical/age restrictions for sibling visitation. Call Child Life or the NICU prior to arrival to confirm that your child will be able to enter the unit.

Family Support Services partners with the NICU to provide families a variety of support. This team consists of the Parent Navigator, Child Life and our March of Dimes team member.

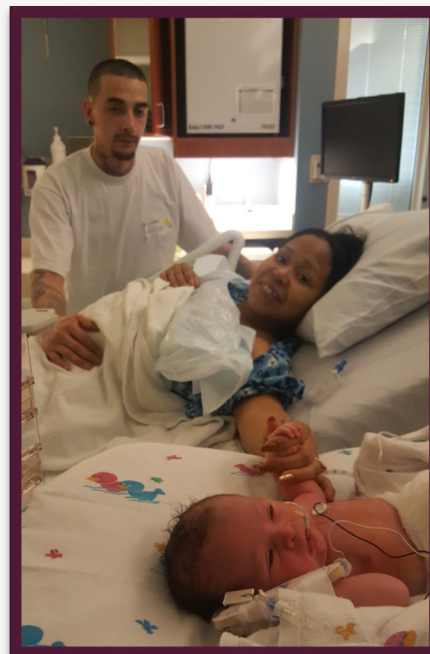
From one-on-one support, NICU tours, support groups, pizza nights, and the super-popular onesie decorating. We are here as your advocates and liaisons, help meet your emotional needs, and to connect you with other NICU parents for support.

Our office is located just outside the parent kitchen.



NICU families enjoying onesie decorating

Kangaroo Care or Skin-to-Skin is very important for you *and* your baby. Science shows that holding skin-to-skin helps your baby soothe, sleep, eat and discharge from the NICU sooner. Simply holding your baby improves their brain. Incredible!

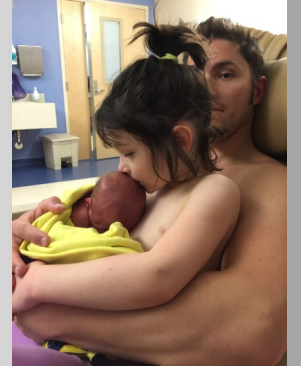
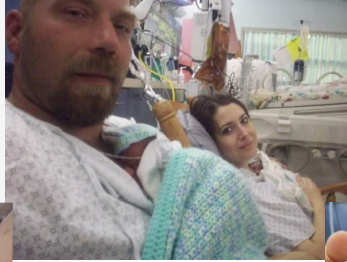
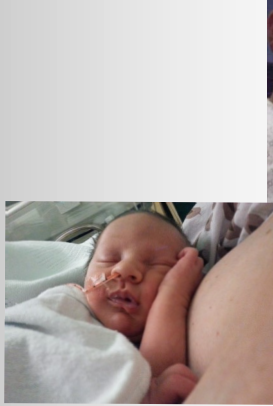


Sometimes, holding your baby is delayed due to a variety of reasons, such as surgery. **Positive touch is essential!** We will assist you in every way to get you to be with your baby.

Cuddle Corp Volunteers

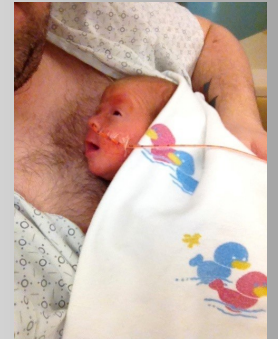
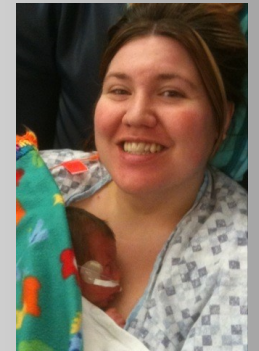
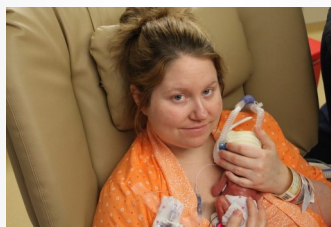
Our unit has dedicated, trained volunteers called Cuddle Corp. These amazing volunteers work in the unit to support parents and staff ensuring babies receive positive touch by holding them.





As your baby is able, we encourage you to do **kangaroo care** as much as possible.

At a minimum, 3 hours per day is recommended. But longer is always supported too!



Kangaroo Care is amazing!



*Tiny
Yet
Mighty*

Every baby in the NICU has unique needs. Our dedicated team works closely to determine what those needs are every day. One may think a premature baby just needs to “get bigger”, however tiny babies have complex needs that are more than just growing. Brain development (promotion and protection) is a large focus of our care. Lung support, eye care, skin integrity and all other systems are given close attention. Parent involvement is crucial to an infants growth and development.

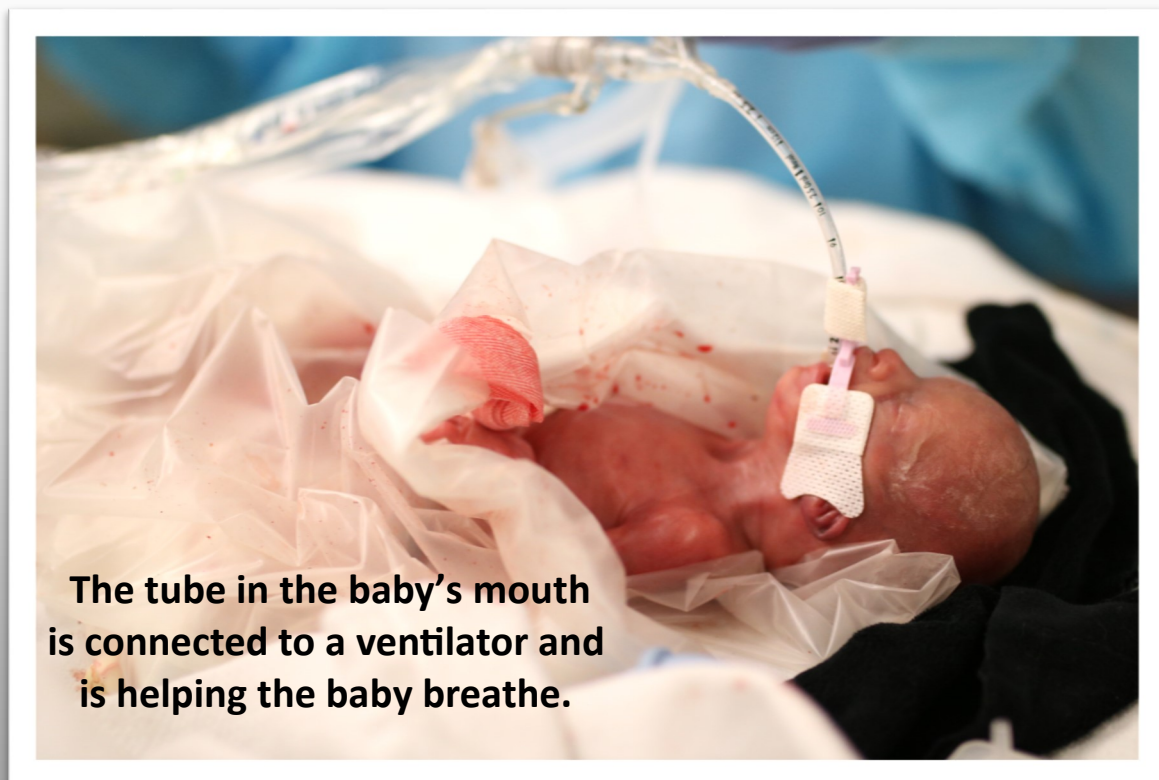
Our goal is for you and your baby to graduate the NICU a happy, healthy & thriving family.

23-weeker footprint



Daddy touching his son for the first time.

This little boy is 23-weeks gestation and weighs 1 lb 4 oz at birth. The team works quickly to stabilize and comfort him. The plastic around the body and head helps to keep him warm.



The tube in the baby's mouth is connected to a ventilator and is helping the baby breathe.



24-weeker footprint



This little cutie was born at 24-weeks gestation and weighed 1 lb 9 oz at birth. For these pictures, she is one week old and weighs 1lb 5 oz. She has lost some of her birth weight, which is expected. She has an IV for nutrition, CPAP for breathing support and her eyes are covered to protect them from light.

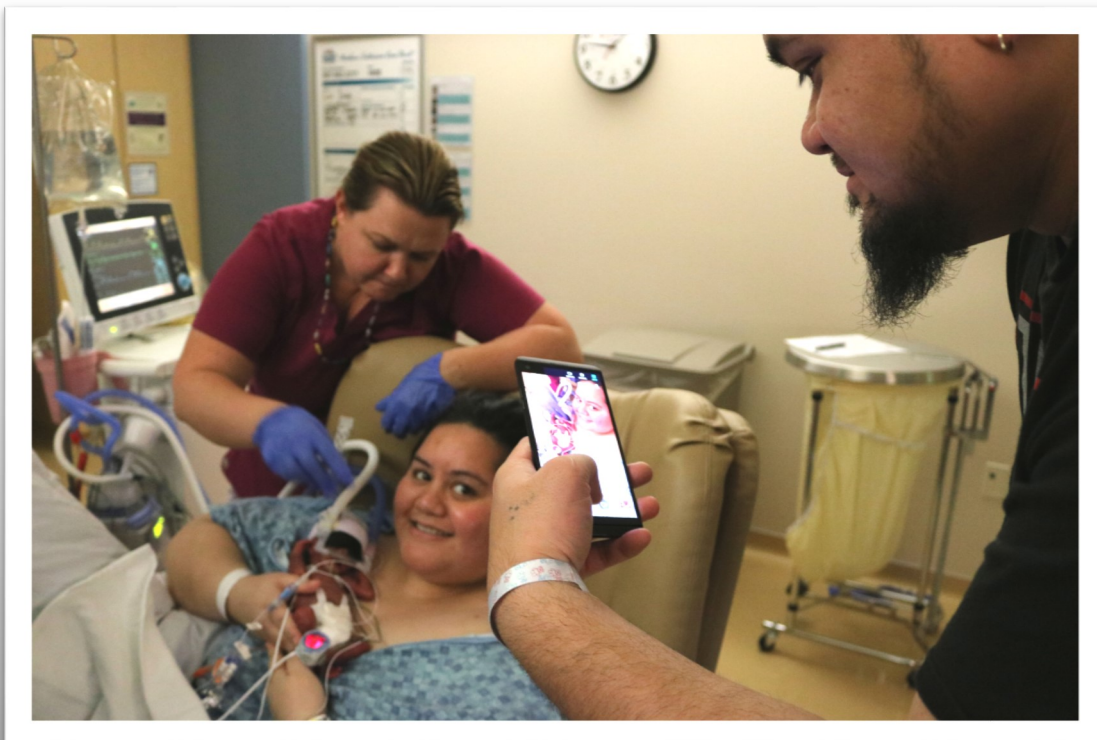


25-weeker footprint



At 25-weeks, this little one weighed 2 lbs at birth. These pictures were taken three days later and he weighs 1 lb 11 oz.

Mommy, Daddy and baby are excited to get to do skin-to-skin together today for the first time. Plan and prepare yourself to hold for as long as possible. To support sleep, you can hold from one care time all the way through until the next one. This is ideal!



It's helpful to capture and celebrate all the special moments.

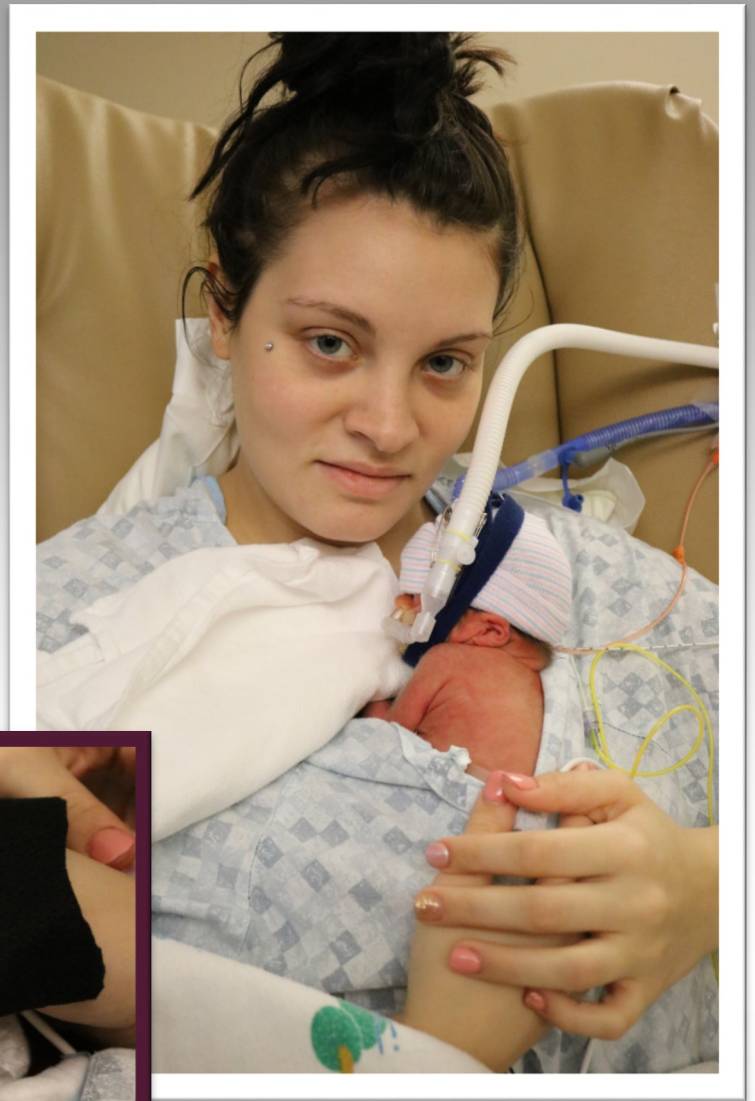
At 26-weeks, this little lady weighs 1lb 13 oz. She is seen here getting positive touch. Positive touch is where parents (who are the best!) or staff support the baby with their hands as seen in the photo. Positive touch is extremely therapeutic and benefits babies in many different ways, including brain development. Our staff will teach you all about it!



26-weeker footprint



27-weeker footprint



This 27-weeker weighed 2 lbs and 11 oz at birth. Mother and son are not only bonding while doing skin-to-skin (Kangaroo Care) but mom is also helping him stay calm, feel supported and helping his brain develop.

This little one is also a really cute super-hero for Halloween!

28-weeker footprint



A baby may be connected to many tubes to provide support. This baby needs help keeping her premature lungs inflated; she has prongs in her nose and tubes connecting her to a device called “bubble CPAP”. This is only one example of a variety of machines we use to help babies breathe.

“Leads” which stick to her tell us her heart rate, oxygen saturation levels and temperature. Every baby in the NICU will have leads on at all times. She also has an IV in her foot giving her medicine and nutrition.

29-weeker footprint



This 29-week gestation baby is under phototherapy lights for jaundice. His eyes are covered with a mask to protect them. Babies move a lot, so if the mask slips, just move it back in place.



Protecting eyes from light is very important, but so is bonding with your baby. Make a plan with your nurse to hold every day.

30-weeker footprint

This little girl was born at 30 weeks and 6 days gestation. Weighing 2 pounds 14 oz, she is very happy to snuggle with her daddy. She is being held on her side so that we can take care of her umbilical area.



32-weeker footprint



This 32-week gestation baby needs help staying warm, IV nutrition and time to grow. Her brain needs time to mature and develop the “suck-swallow-breathe” coordination necessary to allow her to eat on her own. Learning to eat takes time and patience.



5 lbs 4 oz



33-weeker footprints



These two handsome boys experienced twin-to-twin transfusion which means that one twin (A) was getting more nutrients in-utero than the other twin (B).



41-weeker footprint



The NICU takes care of all babies, big and small, for many different reasons. This sweetheart had trouble breathing and needed oxygen support and blood work done to rule out any infection. She was transferred to the NICU via ambulance from another hospital.



9 pounds even

Breast milk is like medicine for your baby



Our nurses and lactation consultants are available to ensure you and your baby are on the best track to establish breast feeding. Occasionally, your baby may want to eat more than you're currently making. This can happen to anyone! To help bridge this gap, the team may talk to you about donor breast milk, formula and supplements, if needed.



This baby boy was born at 30-weeks gestation and weighed 3 lbs 3 oz. In this picture he is 36 weeks gestation and weighs 5 lbs 8 oz. Baby and daddy are sure enjoying this meal together!

Preparing to go home!

In order to go home, each baby will need to...

1. Breathe on their own.
2. Take all their food by mouth. This includes breast feeding, bottle feeding or a combination of both.
3. Maintain their body temperature and stay warm in an open crib.
4. Car seat challenge - maintain their breathing while in a car seat for 90 minutes.

We provide infant CPR classes to all parents before their baby goes home.

There is no exact weight requirement, age or magic “something” to make these things happen. It all comes down to each individual baby and their own rate of growth and development.

Parent involvement helps a lot!



Every NICU journey is different. Yours may be long or it may be short. You and your baby will overcome many challenges. From isolettes to open cribs; many lines to a few. Yours is an adventure worth celebrating.

Congratulations on going home!

Not every journey ends in the way that we may have hoped and dreamed. The NICU team is trained in bereavement support and, when necessary, will support you through your hardest moments.

I hope this book has given you insight into the very special world that is the NICU. It is our honor to care for your family throughout your NICU journey.

Best wishes,

Ginny Shaffer

NICU Parent Navigator and Mom to 23-week twins.



Holland, my NICU graduate



Bryson, my NICU angel

Special thanks to all the caregivers who assisted me with this project and the Alaskan families who graciously allowed me to photograph them and their precious babies.