Family access

Statement of the standard

Parents (and substitutes designated by the parents) have continuous access and are able to remain with the infant throughout the 24 hours.

Benefits

Short-term benefits
- Improved parent-infant bonding
- Increased breastfeeding rates
- Longer skin-to-skin contact
- Reduced short-term pulmonary morbidity
- Improved feeding and weight gain
- Reduced stress for infants
- Increased neuro-behavioural stability in preterm infants
- Increased parental involvement
- Reduced length of stay in the NICU

Long-term benefits
- Improved parent-infant interaction following discharge
- Reduced rates of readmission following NICU discharge
- Reduced costs of NICU hospitalisation
- Improved parental mental health

For parents and family

• Parents and family are informed by healthcare professionals about the importance of being present and being the primary care giver during neonatal care.
• Parents (or family designated substitutes) are educated and supported to be the primary care givers during neonatal care by healthcare professionals.

For healthcare professionals

• A unit guideline on 24-hour access for parents (or family designated substitutes) without interruption during rounds, shift changes and procedures is adhered to by all responsible healthcare professionals.

For neonatal unit

• A unit guideline on 24-hour unit access for parents (or family designated substitutes) and solutions to meet confidentiality needs is available and regularly updated.

For hospitals

• The 24-hour access to the hospital building is authorised for parents (or family designated substitutes).

For health service

• A national guideline on 24-hour access to neonatal units is available and regularly updated and supported by national professional societies and health ministries.

Here you can access the full standard: https://newborn-health-standards.org/family-access/