



# Parental involvement

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## Statement of the standard

Parents are members of the caregiving team and, with individualised support, assume the primary role in the provision of care of their infant, and are active partners in decision-making processes.



### For parents and family

- Parents and family are informed by healthcare professionals about the importance of their involvement in the provision of care for their infant during the stay on the neonatal unit.
- Parents are the primary caregivers for their infant.
- Parents participate in medical rounds.
- Parents are partners in decision-making processes.
- Parents have access to medical records.



### For healthcare professionals

- A unit guideline on parental involvement in terms of being the primary caregivers, participation in medical rounds, and partnering in decision-making is adhered to by all healthcare professionals.
- Training on integrating parents into the neonatal unit is attended by all responsible healthcare professionals.
- The role as educator, coach, and facilitator of care and bonding is undertaken.
- Support parental presence throughout the 24 hours.
- Support specific father presence and participation in the NICU.



### For hospital

- Training on integrating parents into the neonatal unit and resources for the parents as primary caregivers is ensured.
- Appropriate resources are provided to support infant- and family-centred developmental care.
- Provide facilities for parents to reside in the neonatal unit.

## Benefits

### Short-term benefits

- Reduced length of NICU stay
- Increased breastfeeding rate
- Improved weight gain
- Earlier achievement of enteral and suck feeds
- Reduced occurrence of moderate to severe bronchopulmonary dysplasia
- Reduced duration of supplemental oxygen
- Lower rate of nosocomial infection
- Lower antibiotic exposure
- Lower need for parenteral nutrition, peripheral or central venous lines
- Reduced stress and anxiety for parents
- Increased understanding of and involvement in infant pain management
- Increased satisfaction regarding communication about their infant
- Reduced total medical expenditures

### Long-term benefits

- Reduced rate of readmissions
- Increased breastfeeding rate at 18 months
- Higher weight at 18 months
- Reduced risk of maternal depression
- Reduced maternal chronic stress
- Improved child behaviour and long-term cognitive development
- Improved quality of life for the child
- Improved long-term outcomes from mother/father skin-to-skin contact



### For neonatal unit

- A unit guideline on parental involvement in terms of being the primary caregivers, participation in medical rounds, and partnering in decision-making is available and regularly updated.
- A parent advisory panel is engaged in appropriate planning and decision-making processes.
- Conduct ongoing quality assurance of parent participation.
- Provide a unit guideline for parental and family presence throughout the 24 hours.



### For health service

- A national guideline on the role of parents as primary caregivers of their infants and on the role of parents of advisory functions in hospitals is available and regularly updated.

