



NICUPS INKUBATOR

JUNE 2009

Hotline: 314.251.6636

www.miraclebaby.org

NICUPS@mercy.net

WHO ARE THE NICUPS?

Since 1991, the NICUP's purpose has been to support and empower new parents in the NICU to be the strongest advocates for their children. Drawing upon our own experiences as graduate NICU parents, we offer hope, compassion, love and encouragement to each family, while respecting the dignity of all families in crisis.

Each of the parent volunteers were once in a NICU with children of their own. Their personal experience enables them to offer vital emotional support to current NICU families. Support begins as early as mid-pregnancy for mothers on bed rest, continues through their time in the NICU, and is on-going until the family feels support is no longer needed. We are here to help, so please let us know what we can do to assist you.

JUNE CALENDAR	What	Description	When	Where
	NICU Parent Orientation Class	Let us help you orientate yourself to the NICU and to parenting in the NICU. NICU Parent Orientation followed by: DVD presentation	Tuesday 6/9 & 6/23 7:30-9:00 p.m.	Conference Room, NICU South
	"Leaving the Nest" Discharge Class	Our "Leaving the Nest" discharge class is the best way to learn everything you will need to know about taking your baby home from the NICU. The class is taught by NICU RNs and will cover basic baby care, giving medications, car seat safety, and many more helpful topics and tips. We recommend that you sign up for this class when your baby is 30 to 32 weeks of age or older.	Tuesday 6-7 pm Thursday 6-7pm Saturday 11am-12 noon	Conference Room, NICU South To sign-up call 251-6286 or stop by the desk in NICU South
	Unit Visit by a NICUP	A NICUP volunteer will visit the unit to visit with parents and families.	Each Week	NICU North NICU South
	Basic Premie Development Class	Would you like to learn more about your baby's developing sensory system, understanding your baby's cues and how to react to them? This class is recommended for parents whose babies are 32 weeks adjusted age.	6/3 @1:30pm & 6/17 @1:30pm	Please contact Barb Baer in the OT office to sign up for the class by calling 251-6286.
	Super Star Sibling Party	The Super Star Sibling Party is an opportunity for siblings of babies in the SJMMC NICU to learn more about their little sister or brother.	Sunday June 7th 1-2 pm	Conference Room, NICU South To sign-up call 251-6222 or stop by the desk in NICU North

Choosing a Car Seat for the Low Birth Weight Baby

Transportation Facts

Transporting babies that weigh less than 5 pounds has become more common. It is imperative that these children have a safe, easy to use car seat to ride in. Finding the right car seat however is a challenge for many parents. Most of the seats on the market are designed with the minimum weight of 5 pounds. Even if the child meets the minimum weight requirement of 5 pounds, there are no guarantees that the baby will fit snug and secure in the seat. The safest car seat on the market is one that fits your child, fits in your car and one that you will use properly every car ride.

There are some basic features that parents should look for when choosing a seat for a baby, particularly a small baby.

- **A rear-facing infant only seat.** If at all possible, purchase an infant- only rear facing car seat. This is the one with the base and separate infant carrier. These tend to fit babies better.
- **A low weight limit to match your baby's weight.** There are some car seats that start at 4 pounds or birth as the minimum weight.
- **A 5-point harness.** This is a **MUST**. A 5-point harness makes contact with the child at the shoulders, hip and crotch.
- **A low shoulder strap position.** Look for the rear-facing car seat with the lowest harness positions of 8 inches or less. Some will go as low as 5-6 inches.
- **Crotch strap adjuster.** This will allow the crotch strap to be adjusted 5.5 inches or less.
- **Do not purchase a second hand or used car seat.** With second hand or used seats there is no assurance that the seat has not been in a crash. Car seats are good for about 6 years. After that, they should be destroyed.

Car Beds. Car beds are to be used **ONLY** when medically indicated. These are for children who must remain prone or side lying while riding in an automobile.

Here is a list of seats with a Minimum Weight below 5 pounds: (lowest harness height in parentheses)

Car Seats rated "From Birth":

Combi, Connection (7.5" with newborn insert, 8" with out), Graco, Assura (7.5"), Nania, Baby Ride

Car Seats rated "From 4 Pounds"

Britax, Companion (7.25")

(order preemie insert separately)

Chicco, KeyFit 30 (6.5" with newborn insert, 7.25" without)

Eddie Bauer, Surefit (6")

Safety 1st, On Board

How It All Works:

Sir Isaac Newton's theory on gravitation and motion states that an object in motion continues to remain in motion at the original speed until acted on by an outside force. In other words an object keeps moving in the direction it was headed until it is stopped by something. For a vehicle that something may be the brakes, a tree, utility pole, or another vehicle. For the occupant of the vehicle, it could be the windshield, a safety belt or a child restraint system. The force needed to restrain a moving object can be estimated by multiplying $\text{Weight} \times \text{Speed} = \text{Restraining Force}$. For example, a 10 pound infant in a motor vehicle traveling at 30 mph would require at least 300 pounds of force to restrain the infant from moving forward!

When properly used, a child restraint system prevents injury in 5 manners.

1. Prevents ejection. People thrown are 4 times more likely to be killed than those who remain inside.
2. Contact the body at the strongest parts. For an infant and young child, there is no part strong enough to withstand the impact of a crash. The 5-point harness supports the entire body to avoid stress on any one part.
3. Spread forces over a wide area of the body putting less stress on any one part. Rear-facing car seats spread the force along the entire back, neck and head.
4. Allow the body to slowly ride down the crash. A quick change in speed is what causes injury. The car seat helps to slow the body down in a crash.

Protect the head and spinal cord. The rear-facing car seat cocoons the child's head in the headrest area and the side-wings of the seat.

Securing the Seat in the Car:

The safest spot in your motor vehicle is the rear center seating position. Not all cars, however, have this as an option. Prior to installing your car seat, read the owner's manual of your motor vehicle to determine where the safest spot is in your car. Determine if you have the LATCH system available or if you will need to use the seat belt to secure the car seat. If using the seat belt, the car manual will let you know what type seat belt system you have and how to use it. Either the LATCH system is used or the seat belt system to secure the child restraint. **NOT BOTH!** Babies need to ride at a 45 degree angle. This keeps their head midline and thus their airway open. To assure that the child's seat is at the proper angle, all car seats have an angle indicator on either the seat itself or the base. Check the owner's manual of the car seat to determine its location and proper adjustment.

Securing Your Baby in the Harness

- Dress your baby in clothes with legs so that the harness straps fit between the legs. Nothing heavier than a polar fleece or light jacket/sweat shirt. The harness must make contact with the child, not the bulkiness of a coat. Blankets can be put over the baby once the harness is secured.
- Child should be sitting up straight with bottom all the way back in the car seat.
- Shoulder straps should be in the lowest position to fit at or below the child's shoulders. The crotch strap needs to be moved as close as possible to the baby.
- The chest clip should be at armpit or nipple level.
- The shoulder straps should be snug enough that you cannot pinch any slack in the shoulder straps.
- The straps should be straight, flat and not twisted.
- **DO NOT** use aftermarket products such as heads up pieces, lambskin blankets, harness strap covers, etc. in the car seat. Aftermarket products are all items that did not come originally with the seat. If they did not come with the seat, they were not crash tested with the seat and may interfere with the harness system.

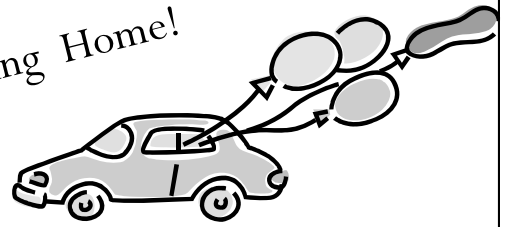
If the child needs to be snuggled in the seat, use a rolled up receiving blanket and place on either side of the baby's head. Do not put anything behind or underneath the child that did not come with the seat.

The Law

In Missouri, children must ride rear-facing in the back seat of a car until they are 1 year of age **AND** 20 pounds. Recent studies have shown that children are 5 times safer riding rear-facing into the second year of life than forward facing. Here at St. John's Mercy Children's Hospital, we encourage parent's to keep their children rear facing beyond what the law requires. We would like for the child to remain rear-facing until he or she reaches the maximum height or weight limit of the seat. For an infant only seat that may be up to 22-30 pounds or 29-32 inches. The next seat (convertible seat) is one that can and should be used rear facing and will take the child up to 35+ pounds rear facing. Once the child reaches the maximum height and weight limit for the rear facing convertible and is at least 1 year of age, the child can be faced forward. Please note with all weight and height limitations, each individual car seat owner's manual must be consulted.

Before Going Home!

Reminder



In order to assure that you have purchased the best seat for your child, do pre-discharge fit-testing. Take the seat and the base out of the box. **READ the DIRECTIONS** that came with the car seat and consult the owner's manual for your vehicle. Secure the base in the automobile and make sure that both the base and carrier fit well in your car. Take the carrier up the nursery and, again consulting the directions for the car seat, fit the child in the carrier. If your baby was delivered at 37 weeks or below, they may have to undergo O2 sat testing in the car seat prior to discharge. Make sure that the child is at a 45 degree angle when the test is being conducted and that they are properly secured in the seat. This **DOES NOT** test how safe or how well your child fits in his or her car seat. It is designed to determine if your baby can maintain his or her airway at a 45 degree angle for the time needed to get the child home safely. If you need help, please consult the following resources. Remember, the safest seat for your child is the one that fits your child, fits your vehicle and the one you will use correctly every time.

Resources

There are a number of resources to help educate parents as to which car seat to purchase. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA, at www.nhtsa.gov offers information ranging from rankings on ease of use of various car seats to recalls. Type in the address and go to Vehicles and Equipment. From there, click on Child Seats to search for specific information. There is also a link to find a certified child passenger safety technician in your area and how to contact that person. Safe Kids St Louis provides injury prevention for children ages 0-14 in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Jefferson County, Franklin County, and Washington County. They collaborate with many agencies to make sure that children in our area are safe. On their website, www.safekidsstl.com you will find a calendar with area car seat checks and a variety of other information concerning child safety.

Jill R. Mueller RN, BSN

Child Passenger Safety Technician



Car Seat Education in the NICU

Please sign up at the front desk in NICU South for a time to meet with someone from our NICU Therapy Team to receive education on car seat positioning and installation.

AM & PM Times Available

Father's Day Photo Shoot



Saturday, June 20th @ 11 am

A Gift for your Father's Day...

The NICU Staff and Volunteers are pleased to offer you one complimentary photo in honor of your first Father's Day with your baby or babies in the NICU.

Professional photographers from The Jeremy Project will be donating their time and talent on Saturday, June 20th at 11 am to be in the NICU to take a professional photo of you and your baby.

Wishing you a wonderful Father's Day!- The NICUPs

Questions Call: (314) 251-6636 or
(314) 251-6222

Thank you to Darcie Deneal, Martha La Fata, and Walgreens for their generous contributions.

Miracle Moment

I entered the hospital at 29 weeks and was on bed rest for one week. I had a condition called IUGR (Intrauterine Growth Retardation). My placenta was giving out and Hannah was stressed, she was working very hard to get what she needed, she had an enlarged heart and there was little amniotic fluid. I had a two-year old at home and was certainly not prepared for a birth two months prior to my delivery date. My first child was born without any complications at full term, so this came as quite a shock to my husband and me.

After one week on bed rest, Hannah was born at 30 weeks gestation, weighing 1 lb 4 oz, 12" long. She barely made any noise when she was born and I just remember seeing her and just remarking at how very tiny she was. I was at a loss for what to do next. I remember sitting by her side quietly just taking it all in, the NICU environment, the machines, the noises, the fact that I was at a loss of what to do or how to help her. As her Mom, I am supposed to make it better, but I couldn't just pick her up hold her or kiss her and make her all better. I knew she needed the help of the NICU staff.

Slowly over the course of the next few weeks I found that I was her support, her cheerleader, her comforter, and even though I couldn't do everything that modern medicine could do, I was her Mom and she needed me there. After three months in the NICU we got to take her home. She is my strong willed child for a reason. She does everything in her own way and on her own time. She adores her big Brother and he is always looking out for her. She is seven years old, healthy, happy and smart as a whip. I am still her supporter, her cheerleader, and her comforter and it is hard to believe she was that little and that fragile once. I still cry when I jot down a story or when I read the letters I wrote her while she was in the NICU, it seems like yesterday. I always look at her and marvel at what a miracle she is how blessed we are to have her.

-Lisa Kilwin (NICUP)



My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, "You're tearing up the grass." "We're not raising grass," Dad would reply. "We're raising boys." ~Harmon Killebrew

Fatherhood is pretending the present you love most is soap-on-a-rope. ~Bill Cosby

A father carries pictures where his money used to be. ~Author Unknown

Happy Father's Day!