

21 CARING FOR YOUR PREMATURE BABY (AT HOME)

OVERVIEW The baby has received a lot of medical care while in the NICU and the transition to home can be difficult. Parents/caregivers no longer have the support from NICU staff or monitors to let them know what their baby needs. The baby may have ongoing medical requirements, such as medications and follow-up appointments. Through observation, parents/caregivers can notice any extra care their baby may need after coming home from the NICU.

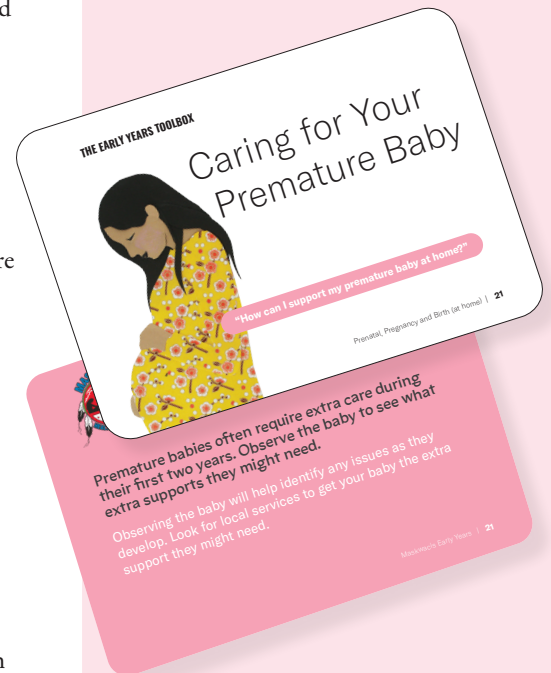
PRACTICE You can support parents/caregivers by reminding them that they are their baby’s most important advocates. They have learned to care for their baby and to recognise their needs in the NICU.

Together, review the information given to parents/caregivers at discharge and talk to them about observing their baby; this will let them know what extra supports the baby may need. You can share community resources that parents/caregivers can access if their baby needs extra care. Support them in following through with all appointments, such as neonatal follow-up clinics to check on the baby’s development, as well as routine check-ups and immunizations.

Encourage parents/caregivers to seek out peer support, as they will benefit from connecting with those who have been through the same experience. If their difficult feelings are too overwhelming, discuss with parents/caregivers how and where they can access community supports.

NOTES

The content of this page was co-developed with Canadian Premature Babies Foundation (CPBF), a parent-led charitable organization providing education, support and advocacy for premature babies and their families.



REFLECTION

What appointments for the baby are coming up?

What are the best ways to support you in caring for the baby?
(transportation for appointments, help around the house, etc.)

Do you have someone with whom you can share your feelings and be supported in them?

Are you receiving community support? (neonatal follow-up clinic, therapies, feeding assessment, play groups, peer support, etc.)

How can you find more information about the baby’s growth?

How can you connect with other parents/caregivers who have spent time in the NICU?