

Resources

March of Dimes:

www.marchofdimes.com/prematurity/

Our mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. Check out the Share Your Story section at www.shareyourstory.org/.

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center:

www.nectac.org

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, NECTAC provides information on early intervention and early childhood special education in all 50 states.

Pathways Awareness:

www.pathwaysawareness.org

View detailed monthly milestone information and learn valuable tips through short videos about encouraging Tummy Time.

PreemieCare:

www.preemiecure.org

Is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families of infants born pre-term through education, support and resources. PreemieCare mentors and provides networking for community based parent-of-preemie support groups.

PreemieVoices:

www.preemievoices.com

Explore resources for families and healthcare providers, and find information about policies and legislation that impact the care of prematurely born infants.

Postpartum Support International:

www.postpartum.net

Dedicated to helping women suffering from perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, including postpartum depression, the most common complication of childbirth.

Prematurity:

www.prematurity.org

Our goal is to support preemie parents by providing information on prematurity and preemie care.

ZERO TO THREE:

www.zerotothree.org

A national nonprofit organization that informs, trains and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.

Early Intervention is Essential

As you watch your baby grow and develop, you will notice when your baby begins to smile, roll over, sit-up and talk. While all children grow and change at their own pace, babies born prematurely may experience delays in their development. Early Intervention is designed to respond to parent's concerns and also provides many services.

Early intervention is the process of providing services, education and support to young children who:

- are deemed to have an established condition,
- are evaluated and deemed to have a diagnosed physical or mental condition (with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay),
- have an existing delay, or
- are at-risk of developing a delay or special need that may affect their development or impede their education.

The purpose of early intervention is to lessen the effects of the disability or delay. Services are designed to identify and meet a child's needs in five developmental areas, including: physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development, and adaptive development. Early Intervention is based on federal legislation through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Who Do I Contact? If you have a concern, or want to make a referral to Early Intervention visit the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website below to find your local Early Intervention agency.

www.nectac.org/contact/ptccord.asp

This brochure is a publication of the Minnesota Prematurity Coalition, 2010
www.MNPrematurityCoalition.org

Premature Babies: An Early Beginning



What do our parents & caregivers need to know to help us grow?

Important information for families with babies born between 23 and 36 weeks gestation.

What's Different about Parenting Your Premature Baby?

Here are some great tips to help your baby grow and develop in the first months at home.



Nutrition/Feeding

Be sure I am fully awake before you feed me and feed me in a quiet place where I won't be distracted.

Feed me slowly and let me take my time.

Be sure to hold me, and never prop my bottle.

After I finish eating, hold me still and upright on your shoulder for a few minutes. This helps me avoid spitting-up.

Keeping Me Healthy

I have a higher risk of getting infections, so be careful where you take me and who comes to visit us, especially during flu season.

Everyone who touches me needs to wash their hands! Put a sign up to remind them. Keep hand sanitizer in the house, the car, and my diaper bag.

Don't let anyone smoke around me.

Be sure to bring me to my regularly scheduled doctor visits, and keep me up-to-date on my immunizations.

If I have any symptoms of illness call the nurse-line or bring me into my doctor. Symptoms can be blueness around my lips or nose, vomiting, trouble breathing, a fever higher than 100.4 degrees, or maybe I just don't seem 'right' to you.

Don't forget to cover coughs and/or sneezes.

Be sure to keep a list of any questions that you have about me for my doctor, so you are sure to ask them at my appointments.

Developing Skills

Like babies born full-term, I will learn many new skills over time and on my own schedule.

Adjust for my age, taking into account I came early! If I am now 6 months old but born 2 months early – expect me to be more like a four month old.

Some of these early skills will be smiling and paying attention for longer periods of time. I will begin to swipe at toys, then learn to hold and play with them.

Keep track of what you see me do and anything you are concerned I can't do.

Share any concerns with my doctor and also contact Help Me Grow for a free evaluation of my development. Please see the back panel for more information on Help Me Grow.

Interactions/Playing

I love to look at your face and hear your voice.

Sometimes if you look at me and talk to me at the same time, it might be too much!

You can tell how I am feeling by reading my facial cues. Watch me closely and try to learn my different stress cues, signs of stability, and coping skills.

If I am getting stressed I may frown, turn away, or my face will get either red or pale. If I am doing any of those things, I need a break.

At other times, I will be bright eyed and looking for someone to talk to me and play with me.

Sleeping

Sleep is especially important for me to grow!

Be sure my sleeping area is quiet and dark even during day-time naps, this helps me get into a deep sleep.

Be sure my mattress is tight-fitting in my crib or bassinet.

My crib should not have toys, bumper pads or blankets.

If it is cool, use a sleeper to keep me warm, not a blanket.

Just like every other baby, I need to **sleep** on my back; but when I am **awake** let me play on my tummy so I get stronger!

Caring for Yourself

In order to be able to take good care of me, you need to take care of yourself too.

Raising me is not always an easy task. You might feel sad, overwhelmed, guilty over my early birth, depressed, or even angry. These feelings are normal, but there are people who can help you, too! Let your doctor know if you have these symptoms.

Did you know post-partum depression is more common when your baby is born early? Both moms and dads can be affected.

No matter how frustrated you feel, please don't shake me. Call your friend. Get someone to help take care of me. Or put me in my crib and step away for a while.