

Developmental care rounds

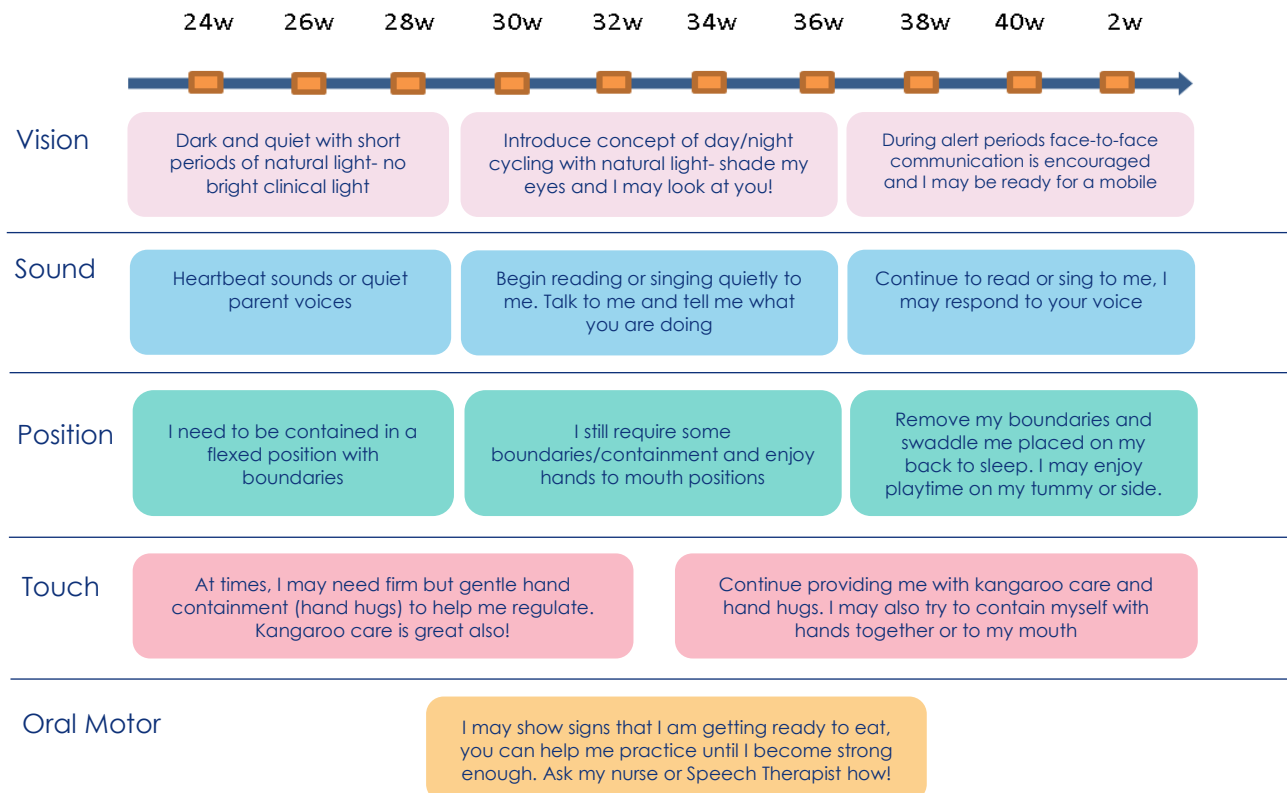
NCCU

What is neuroprotective developmental care?

During the newborn period the brain goes through a period of critical development. Babies who are born early or admitted to a neonatal unit for other reasons are exposed to various different and sometimes noxious stimuli compared to the well newborn. This can cause a disruption to the normal development of the evolving brain. Everyday tasks such as nappy changes and handling can prove stressful for the unwell or premature baby. Developmental care is a collection of strategies in collaboration with families to individualise care to meet your baby's needs. The goal is to maximise neurodevelopmental outcomes, reduce stress, enhance conservation of energy, promote growth and protect sleep, ultimately reducing potential long term cognitive and behavioural issues.

Aspects of developmental care

Each and every baby is at a different stage of neurodevelopment and therefore should not be treated the same. The table below is a timeline guide of interactions and environmental influences for babies at different gestations:

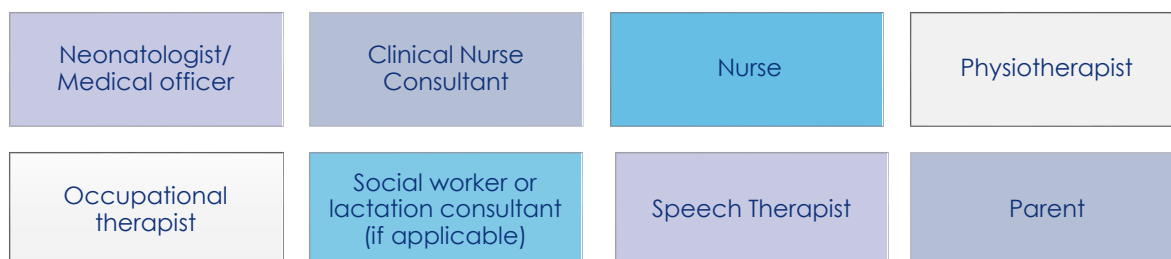


By observing their behaviour, they tell us a story of whether they are ready to engage or need space to regroup and settle. Developmental care focuses on seven domains including:

- Optimising nutrition
- Minimising stress and pain
- Protecting skin
- Positioning and handling
- Partnering with families
- Safeguarding sleep
- Senses (sound, touch, smell and taste, temperature, light)

Developmental care team:

The team consists of multiple people from different disciplines working together to optimise the best developmental outcomes for your baby. During a developmental care round not all of the team members will be present however they will be involved with implementing strategies specifically for your baby and may be on the round when your baby is reviewed. The team includes:



What are developmental care rounds?

Developmental care rounds are conducted by a multidisciplinary team who aim to work with you about individualising care recommendations for your baby. You are the most important part of the team as the expert in your baby's needs, behaviours and 'likes'. For this reason we recommend you being present when the team reviews your baby. You will hear certain behaviours your baby displays being referred to as 'cues' and we can help you understand what these cues may indicate. We will ask you what your main goals or focus is for engaging with your baby and their daily routine in the NCCU. This will help us identify strategies that will benefit both you and your baby. We will initiate a developmental care plan to place at your baby's bedside with the discussed and recommended strategies to ensure your baby's neurodevelopmental needs are met.

How can I help my baby?

Parenting in the NCCU can be a challenge for many different reasons which may affect individuals in different ways. Sitting beside and watching your baby can help you understand their way of communicating. Responding to your baby's cues is one way you can help your baby. We, as a team aim to make you feel more comfortable in identifying your baby's behaviours and what they may mean. Making them feel safe by comforting your baby when they are upset is very important to minimise stress and optimise conservation of energy for growth and development. You may look at introducing a pacifier for non-nutritive sucking, hand hugs (holding arms and legs in softly) or providing a finger to hold. Kangaroo care or 'skin-to-skin cuddles' are important as this has many benefits for both you and your baby.

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