

NICU Family Support

Having an infant in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is a stressful experience. Because family members are such valuable members of the baby's care team, providing support for you and your family is integral to the care for your baby.

Through a partnership with the March of Dimes, Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) provides a formal NICU family support team. The program is staffed by family support specialists, all former NICU mothers, who offer support and perspective that only someone who has lived through this difficult experience can provide. They know first-hand that having a baby in the NICU can bring out many emotions: fear, frustration, gratitude, hope, and more. They help parents navigate the many emotional twists and turns that accompany the NICU journey.

In addition to bedside support, NICU Family Support Specialists offer educational information and sponsor and organize many activities and events for families throughout each month. These activities are posted on our monthly calendar.



[NICU Parent Advisory Council \(PAC\)](#)

The NICU Parent Advisory Council is a vibrant and enthusiastic volunteer committee composed of former NICU parents. The volunteers work on a number of different committees such as: holiday helpers, social committee, craft committee, alumni relations, and donations. If any former NICU parent is interested in volunteering, we encourage him or her to contact NICU Family Support for more information.

Family Events and Activities

Bedside Reading: Reading at the bedside allows parents the opportunity to bond with their baby. Newborns can recognize and are comforted by the sound of their parents' voices and new research suggests this might enhance brain development. Our NICU team encourages bedside reading both in the NICU and at home, so we give each family a new book to keep.

Journey Beads: Parents create a tangible, personal memento of your baby's NICU journey. For each milestone the baby or parents achieve, they earn a bead. The beads are strung together and make a beautiful, individual bracelet as a keepsake of your newborn's miraculous start in life.

Sibling Support: Having a baby in the NICU can be life changing for siblings. We give big brothers and sisters reading books and coloring books to help them understand their sibling's unexpected journey.

Parents' Night Out: Once a month, we offer parents an evening "out" on us, right here in the NICU. In the lounge, we serve a delicious dinner, prepared by various catering services. Parents truly feel cared for as they reconnect with each other and meet other parents going through the NICU experience.

Game Day: No matter the season, there is always a Boston team to cheer for! We schedule monthly Game Day gatherings in the NICU conference room. We encourage parents to come, have something to eat, meet other parents, and take a much needed break.

Decorating Onesies: Several times a month we decorate onesies. Family members and supervised siblings can create a beautiful onesie for their little NICU miracle. The onesies are simple to paint and are beautiful. This activity brings out the artist in all, even the most reluctant painters.

