

EARLY STARTER CLUB NEWSLETTER

2003 Issue 1

Introduction

Early Starter Club is a support group for preterm infants and their parents. The group is made up of volunteer parents, medical social workers, physiotherapist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, pharmacist, dietitian, nurses and doctors. Preterm infants and their parents often face unique concerns and issues, both during hospitalization and after discharge.

Activities in 2002



Three support group meetings were held in 2002; in March, June and September respectively. These meetings usually start off with a talk by a healthcare provider on a topic of concern to parents. The topics covered last year included: Administration of common drugs in children, Infant massage and its benefits and Long term eye problem in premature babies. The



organizers were encouraged by the warm response of the parents who took time to attend the meetings as well as share

their personal experience with other parents.

In 2002, the support group has been affiliated to the Club Rainbow, a non-government charitable organization. This affiliation seeks to provide greater support to premature babies who have additional problems of chronic lung disease, visual & hearing problems and developmental problems.

Activities planned for 2003

The members strive to meet the needs of the parents better



through telephone follow-up and home visits. With greater involvement of parents in planning the activities, it is hoped that these activities will be more relevant and useful.

Members

Choo Lee Lain (Chairperson)
Ng Peck Luan
Tan Wah Chuan
Ng Pick Gate

Advisors

NM Ng Lay Keng
Dr Low Kah Tzay

Coming Event

Early Starter Club Meeting
15 March 2003, 2.30pm
Seminar Room 4D, Level 4,
Main Building,
National University Hospital

Frequently asked questions & some suggested answers

I feel guilty that I did something to cause my baby to be premature.

This is a common reaction of many parents. It is important to realize that many parents of premature infants feel some guilt, even if they took excellent care of themselves during pregnancy. Mothers who have had excellent prenatal care, who have watched their diet, may still have premature babies. It will be important to find out if the doctors know what caused your baby to be premature. In most cases, the cause will be something out of your control. Talking with your doctor or others will help these feelings of guilt go away.

I am worried that my baby will not know that I am his/her parent.

It is normal to have this worry, but it is very likely that your baby already knows that you are its parent. Babies learn to recognize their mothers' voices while they are in the womb. So a premature baby can already tell the differences between its mothers voice and the voices of nurses and doctors. It has been shown that the oxygen saturation of premature babies improves when their parents are close by. So when you gently stroke your baby, talk softly. Your baby will then learn that you have the voice that is special; the voice that gives comfort, the voice your baby will want to go home with.

(Adapted from information found at www.pediatrics.wisc.edu)