

EARLY STARTER CLUB NEWSLETTER

2003 Issue 2

Introduction

Early Starter Club is a support group for preterm infants and their parents. From conversations with parents and a survey conducted, we found that parents appreciate a home visit after discharge. This will allow health care providers to interact with home care givers in the home environment. With the enthusiasm of the NICU nurses and our medical social worker, the support group started making home visits this year.

Home visits



On 2 July 2003, four staff volunteers visited the homes of two discharged preterm babies. This is the second occasion when these trips are made this year. Lee Lain, Peck Luan, Wah Chuan & Hwee Chin spent about 1 ½ hours in each of the two homes. There was informal and meaningful interaction with care givers regarding the home environment and nursing care. Care givers also share their experience in looking after the babies and the difficulties encountered and overcome.

Support Group Meeting

These meetings usually start off with a talk by a healthcare provider on a topic of concern to parents. The first meeting this year was held on 15 March

2003. Dr Jennifer Kiing, a child development specialist gave a talk on childhood development. This was followed by a question and answer session. There was an opportunity for parents to share their experience as well. It was heart warming to hear the real- life trials and triumphs of parents caring for their preterm infant.



It is hoped that these activities will remain relevant and useful and parents can play an active role in the planning and directions of these meetings.

Members

Choo Lee Lain (Chairperson)
Ng Peck Luan
Tan Wah Chuan
Ng Pick Gate
Zhang Su He
Ng Hwee Chin
Dr Yvonne Ng

Advisors

NM Ng Lay Keng
Dr Low Kah Tzay

Coming Event

Early Starter Club Meeting
Talk on "Speech development in Early Childhood" + Video

18 October 2003, 2.30pm
Seminar Room 4D, Level 4,
Main Building,
National University Hospital

Commonly asked questions & some suggested answers

What can I do if my baby cries frequently?

Many premature babies will have days of frequent crying. They can be more sensitive to stimulation and they can be more sensitive to gas pains. Some suggestions are:
Burp your baby every 5-10 minutes during feeding.
Keep your baby's head higher than the rest of the body while feeding.

Be sure your infant is not ill (fever, diarrhea, poor colour).

Swaddle your baby by wrapping his arms & legs snugly in a blanket.

Walk with your baby or gently rock your baby.

Give the baby a warm bath. Many parents find that it is very difficult to keep in control during a frantic crying episode. Try to remain calm. Call for help especially if you feel so stressed that you fear that you might hurt the baby. It is always okay to check with your doctor, with any concern you may have.

Are hiccups & sneezes normal?

Yes, hiccups & sneezes are normal. Normally, hiccups will just go away if you let them run their course. You can offer a little water or if you are breastfeeding let your baby suckle for a minute or two. Sneezes will clear the passages of your baby's nose. It is nature's way of helping the infant to get rid of dust or other irritants. Persistent sneezing, with other symptoms, may indicate that your baby has a cold. (Adapted from information found at www.pediatrics.wisc.edu)