

EARLY STARTER CLUB NEWSLETTER

2004 Issue 1

(For internal circulation only)

Introduction

Early Starter Club is a support group for preterm infants and their parents. As the group matures, we aim to involve parents more actively in the activities. More importantly, parents' views are vital to set the goals and objectives of the group. We have invited two parents to be involved in the organization of the meetings. We are glad that they have graciously agreed despite their schedule of juggling their work and family responsibilities which include looking after a growing preterm baby. It is hoped that more parents can be involved in various capacity.

Parent 'Buddy'

Another area for involvement is to be a 'buddy' to the parents of a baby who is currently admitted in the NICU. Through feedback, parents have expressed their feeling of 'lost' & 'alone' when their preterm baby is born and required admission to NICU. We hope that parents whose child had gone through similar admission could be 'buddy' to these parents and show them that they are not 'alone'.

Support Group Meeting

The second meeting last year was held on 18 October 2003.



Ms Lela Ioumo, an auditory verbal therapist gave a talk on 'speech development in early childhood'. It was very well attended.



Parents had the opportunity to have their concerns and questions about their children's speech development answered.



Members

Choo Lee Lain (Chairperson)
Ng Peck Luan
Tan Wah Chuan
Ng Pick Gate
Zhang Su He
Adela Chua
Dr Yvonne Ng
Cynthia Chew (Parent Rep)
Tan Geok Im (Parent Rep)

Advisors

NM Ng Lay Keng
Dr Low Kah Tzay

Coming Event

Early Starter Club Meeting
Talk & workshop on "Motor milestones & exercise for preterm baby"
20 March 2004, 2.30pm
Lecture Theatre, Level 6, Main Building, National University Hospital

Commonly asked questions & some suggested answers

What can I do to help my baby adjust to the home environment?

The adjustment to home environment from a noisy nursery may be difficult for some premature babies. Some suggestions are:
Keep lights dimmed.
Swaddle your baby by wrapping his arms and legs with a blanket.
Play soft music or keep television on during the day.

How do I interact with my baby at home?

Things you can do are:
Talk, Sing or Read a book to the baby.
Draw a picture with a black marker on white paper.
Touch and hold the baby close to you.
Carry the baby in a sling or pack in front of you.
Lay on your side and place baby next to you. Baby loves to look at faces and eyes.

What to do when my baby has his days & nights mixed up?

It is best to minimize stimulation during the night feeds. Some suggestions are:
Do not use bright light when giving the night feed.
Change the baby before feeding.
Talk minimally and softly during the night feed.
Do not rock the baby for a long time after the feed.

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