

# NICU Self-Assessment Tool for Comprehensive Family Support



"Yes, we do this well." = 2      "Sometimes. We're making progress but we haven't reached our goal." = 1      "No. We haven't begun work on this goal." = 0

Family-Centered Developmental Care	Yes = 2	Some = 1	No = 0
1. Are family resources and materials available in different languages that reflect the NICU's patient population?			
2. Are parents welcomed and encouraged to attend and participate in medical rounds? Nursing shift changes?			
3. Do NICU staff regard parents as equal members of the caregiving team?			
4. Do NICU nurses serve as guides and mentors to families as the care for their babies?			
5. Do parents have unlimited time and opportunity to be with their baby?			
6. Do parents have access to their baby's medical records and a staff member to help them understand them?			
7. Does the NICU team mentor parents and caregivers to help them recognize and understand their babies' cues and behaviors (e.g., stress behaviors and feeding cues)? Do they teach appropriate intervention strategies?			
8. Are parents encouraged to do skin-to-skin care early and often? Do staff support and facilitate uninterrupted skin-to-skin care?			
9. Does the NICU have a dedicated specialist such as a Child Life Specialist or offer resources and mentoring on the developmentally appropriate support of siblings?			
10. Is the stress of grandparents acknowledged and addressed? Is their special role as support to parents honored and encouraged?			
11. Are interpreters or an interpreter service readily available to staff and parents at all times? Do families know about this service?			
12. Do all staff receive training in provision of family-centered developmental care?			
Score for Family-Centered Developmental Care (Maximum is 24)			
Peer-to-Peer Support	Yes = 2	Some = 1	No = 0
1. Does the NICU have a relationship with an active NICU peer support organization? Do the staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of NICU families?			
2. Have NICU and hospital administration worked through any concerns about volunteers' roles and HIPPA?			
3. Is more than one kind of peer support offered (e.g. in-person, by phone or text, one-on-one, in a group setting)?			
4. Does the peer support organization facilitator ensure volunteer training is comprehensive and done using best practices?			

5. Is space provided in the NICU for both small meetings with volunteer mentors and informal gathering of parents?			
6. Does the NICU offer the amenities families need to stay with their babies (e.g., computers, showers, laundry, kitchen, sibling areas, free parking)?			
7. Are sibling programs and childcare options provided for parents who wish to meet with a peer support person?			
8. Does the NICU have a paid position for a Parent Support Coordinator?			
9. Does the NICU have a Parent Advisory Board?			
10. Are parents involved in the Quality Improvement process?			
Score for Peer-to-Peer Support (Maximum is 20)			
<b>NICU Mental Health Professionals (NMHPs)</b>	<b>Yes = 2</b>	<b>Some = 1</b>	<b>No = 0</b>
1. Does the NICU have adequate staffing of NMHPs? One social worker and one psychologist/20 beds?			
2. Do NMHPs see mothers who are hospitalized in the antepartum area of the hospital?			
3. Does the NICU have a policy that NMHPs meet with all parents within 3 days of admission?			
4. Has the team identified who is responsible for screening parents for emotional distress, methods to be used, and how results will be charted?			
5. Is there a policy for repeated screening?			
6. Do NMHP staff have dedicated time for NMHP counseling for parents in the NICU?			
7. Are there regular education/support groups for parents supervised by NMHPs and other staff/parent volunteers?			
8. Does the NICU have a list of referral resources for community-based support services and/or outside counselors for parents in need?			
9. Do the referral resources include therapists from hospital behavioral health departments doing outpatient therapy in the NICU?			
10. Are telehealth services utilized? Is there a role for them?			
11. Does the NICU have policies regarding confidentiality of parents' screening results? Is there a process for sharing information with other providers?			
Score for NICU Mental Health Professionals (Maximum is 22)			
<b>Palliative and Bereavement Care</b>	<b>Yes = 2</b>	<b>Some = 1</b>	<b>No = 0</b>
1. Do Labor and Delivery, the NICU, and Well Baby nursery share policies for palliative care?			
2. Does the Labor and Delivery unit have a template for a Birth Plan to share with parents who are anticipating loss in the neonatal period?			

3. Are parents anticipating an early loss offered a multidisciplinary antenatal consult?			
4. Is there a list of bereavement interventions to offer parents, and is it known to all staff in Labor and Delivery, the NICU and Well Baby Nursery?			
5. Do the perinatal service areas of the hospital (Labor & Delivery and NICU) have a working relationship with an organization either locally or nationally that provides remembrance photography?			
6. Does the NICU team receiving training in provision of palliative care?			
7. Does the NICU medical team receive training in how to deliver 'bad news'?			
8. Are follow-up contacts made with the family after a loss?			
9. Are debriefing sessions regularly held after the loss of a baby in the NICU?			
10. Does the NICU have a working relationship with the local organ donation agency?			
Score for Palliative and Bereavement Care (Maximum is 20)			
<b>NICU Discharge and Follow-Up</b>	<b>Yes = 2</b>	<b>Some = 1</b>	<b>No = 0</b>
1. Are NICU parents rescreened for emotional distress prior to their baby's discharge (if NICU stay has been > 1 week), and results communicated to follow-up providers?			
2. Does every family receive some type of home visitation or follow-up phone call after their baby's discharge?			
3. Does the NICU staff have a standardized checklist to review with parents before their baby's discharge?			
4. Are babies being appropriately and consistently referred to Early Intervention services?			
5. Does every follow-up provider receive a copy of the baby's medical record, or have access to the electronic medical record?			
6. Does the NICU staff make first follow-up appointments for babies so that parents are relieved of this stressor?			
7. Are parents given written discharge information, appointment information, and copies of medical records prior to discharge?			
Score for NICU Discharge and Follow-Up (Maximum is 14)			
<b>Staff Education and Support</b>	<b>Yes = 2</b>	<b>Some = 1</b>	<b>No = 0</b>
1. Do all new NICU nurses and other staff get education about how to provide paraprofessional psychosocial support to NICU parents within the first two months of starting their position?			
2. Does the NICU staff embrace a team spirit in terms of interdisciplinary cooperation?			
3. Do bedside nurses and physician/NNP staff self-report a low rate of burnout?			
4. Does the NICU staff regularly (once a year or more frequently) receive education on the psychosocial needs of parents and how to meet these needs, as well as education on self-care?			

5. Do bedside nurses generally feel supported by nursing administration, particularly in terms of staffing patterns?			
6. Does the hospital offer psychological support for staff who experience burnout or PTSD related to patient care?			
7. Is the NICU physical environment optimal for promoting staff satisfaction? Could improvements be made?			
8. Does the NICU medical team follow a protocol for routinely communicating with parents?			
9. Is a member of the hospital's pastoral care staff embedded in the NICU team?			
Score for Staff Education and Support (Maximum is 18)			

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_ (Maximum = 59)

- 50-59: Exemplifying Family Support
- 30-49: On our way to developing Family Support
- 0-29: Beginning our journey towards better Family Support

## NOTES:

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*"In the ideal NICU, psychosocial support of both NICU parents and staff should be goals equal in importance to the health and development of babies."* - Hynan MT & Hall SL.

"Introduction: Psychosocial Program Standards for NICU Parents."

Read the Interdisciplinary Recommendations for Psychosocial Support of NICU Parents in Journal of Perinatology Supplement, Dec. 2015.

Find more tools and resources at [www.support4NICUparents.org](http://www.support4NICUparents.org)

