

From Preemie Parent to FiCare champion: Empowering NICU parents to become advocates

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FAMILY-CENTERED CARE
TASKFORCE







love













fiCare
Family Integrated Care





Gratitude







Empowered

Peer Support

Advocate

Loved

Knowledge

Confident

Voice



“The Family Integrated Care model was an unprecedented part of being a parent of a premature baby. I was not prepared for my baby to arrive so early.

*The FiCare model mitigated this dilemma by positioning parents to be **advocates for their babies** from the outset.”*
~ Yasmin

*“Through active participation in medical rounds, inquiring about critical aspects and **acquiring essential caregiving skills** for our baby, and understanding of the nuances of monitoring her health, such as interpreting pulse oximeter readings, we **gained a sense of confidence** through our NICU experience and the transition to home”. ~ Adrienne*











DO NO HARM

Visitor Checklist ✓

When you visit a patient:

- You must wear the mask provided to you at all times, including in patient rooms.
- Do not eat or drink in patient rooms, hallways or common areas.
- Postpone your visit if you feel unwell.

ATTENTION

Clean your hands!
Help stop the spread of infection.

Do not visit patients if you have any of these symptoms:

-
-
-
-

Attention!
No Coats in the NICU

Please leave all coats in:
The locker areas
or
The NICU Family Lounge

Please take all responsibility with you.
Thank you for your cooperation.

FAMILY AND VISITORS

To enter the unit,
please pick up the phone
to connect with the
Reception desk.

AUTOMATIC CAUTION DOOR

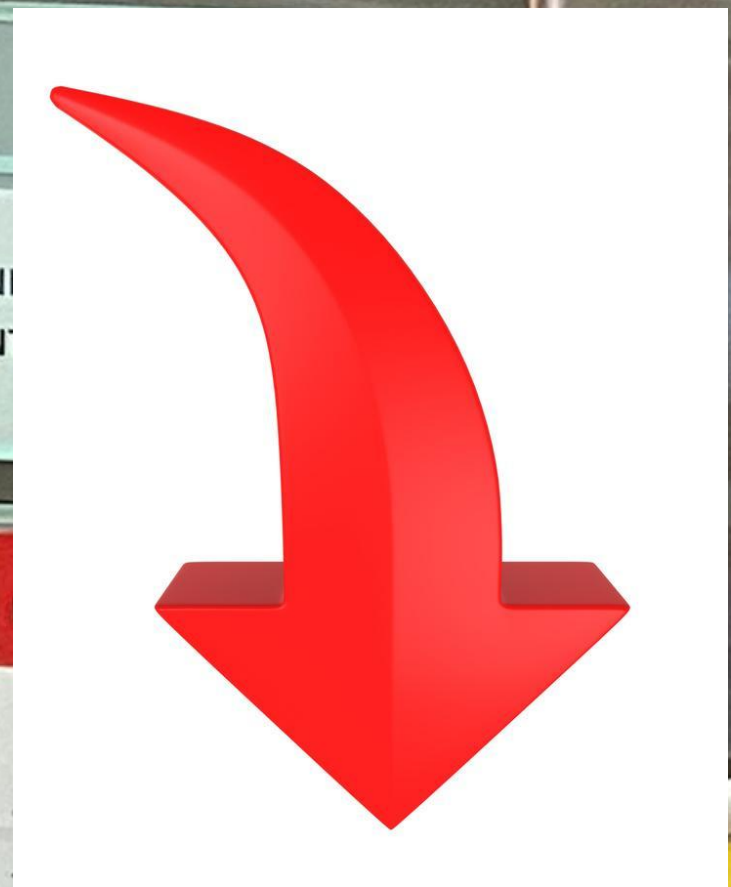
ACTIVATE SWITCH TO OPERATE

AUTOMATIC CAUTION DOOR

ACTIVATE SWITCH TO OPERATE

EMERGENCY UNLOCK FIRE

Welcome to the NICU



NICU

STOP

ATTENTION

Clean your hands!
Help stop the spread of infection.

Do not visit patients if you have any of these symptoms:

-
-
-
-

STOP

The Parent Journey: *critical beginnings*



Postpartum

SEE

CONNECT

RECEIVE

LEARN

PROVIDE

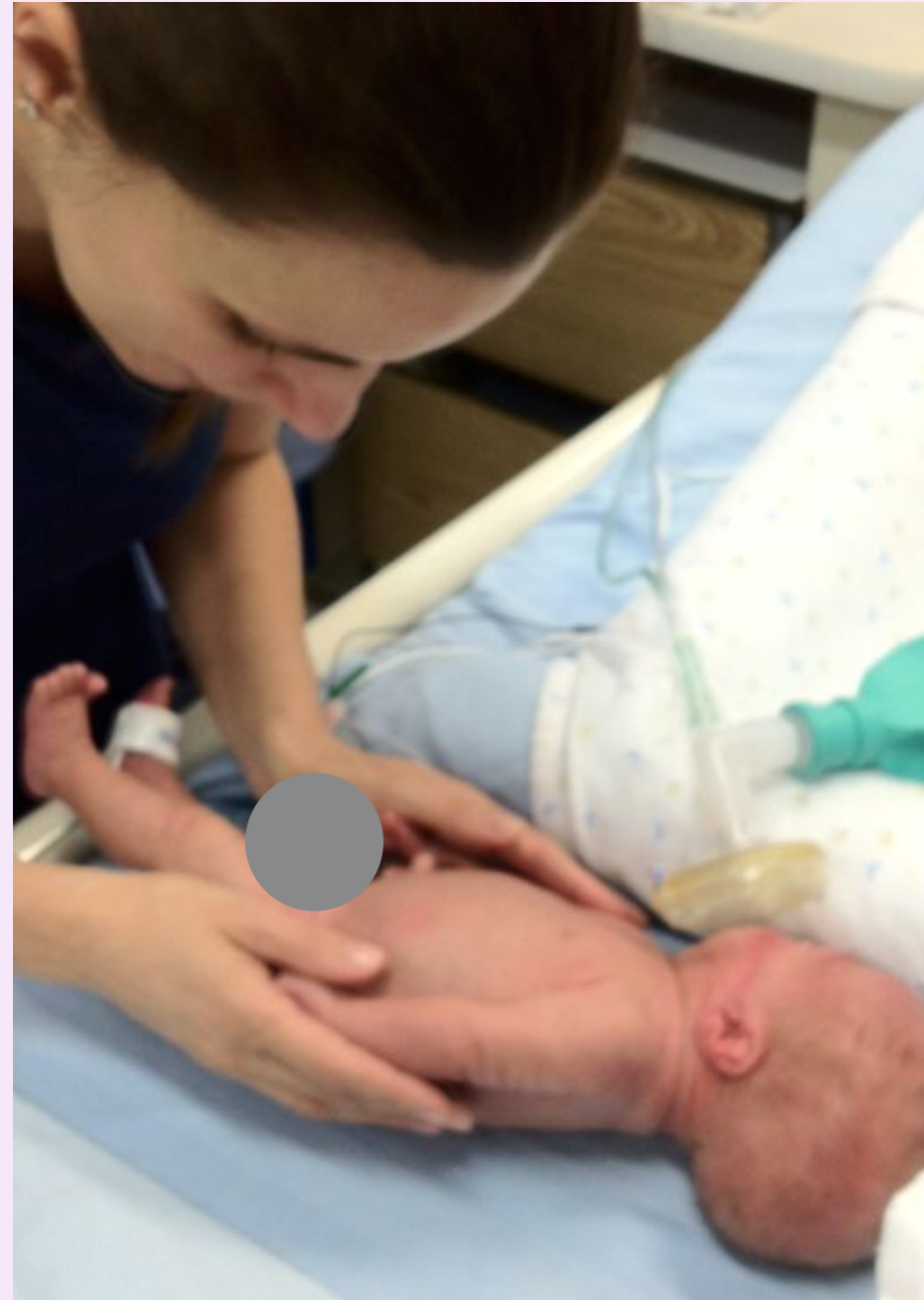


First time in NICU

It's all about communication!



Welcome parents as partners in care



Teach parents to observe and understand



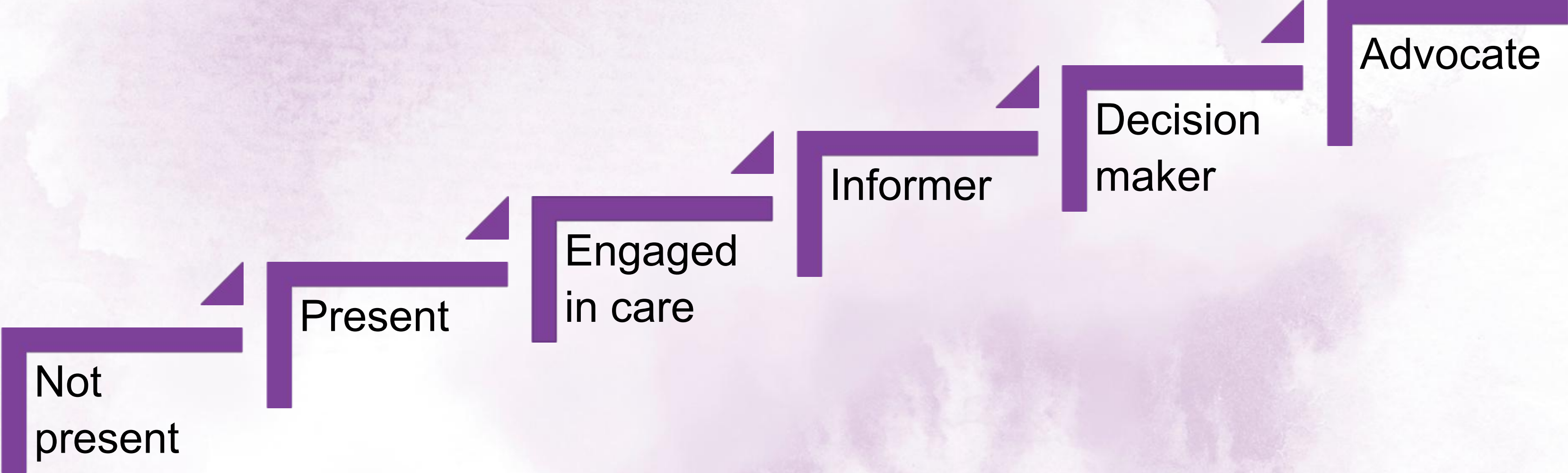
Teach parents how to talk, read and touch



Support parents to provide skin-to-skin care



Parent Involvement



Working Together



NICU families shouldn't have to do it alone.

Canadian Premature Babies Foundation (CPBF) is a parent-led charitable organization supporting premature babies and their families across Canada.

We are here for you every step of the way.

Support

Free programs that connect you with other parents, peer mentors, and mental health resources



Education

Resources to help you feel confident and empowered to advocate and care for your baby

Awareness

Giving a voice to premature babies and their families

Research

Working with researchers for better care and experiences

Visit us online for resources and programs focused on preemie babies and their families.



canadianpreemies.org



@CanadianPreemies



@CanadianPremie



Education

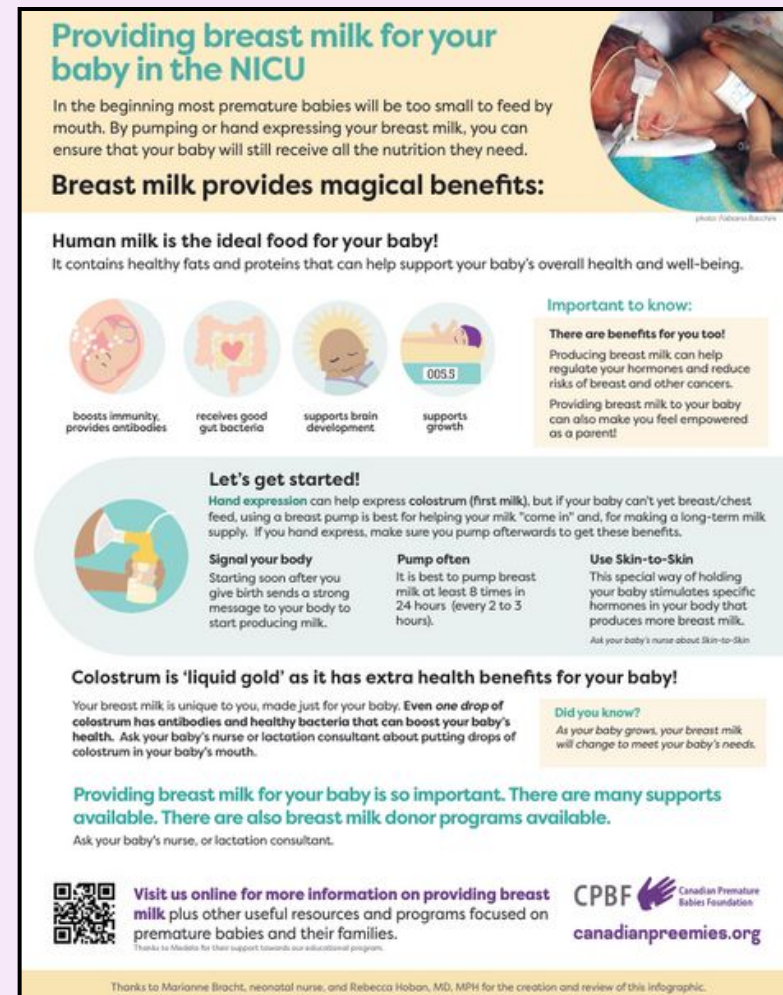
CPBF believes that education is essential to enable parents to feel confident and comfortable to parent their baby (babies), in the NICU and beyond.

We work closely with researchers, clinicians and past NICU parents to ensure all our materials are current and evidence-based.

For families:

- Infographics
- Videos (i.e. Indigenous families)
- Podcasts
- Booklets
- Multiple languages materials

For healthcare providers:



Providing breast milk for your baby in the NICU

In the beginning most premature babies will be too small to feed by mouth. By pumping or hand expressing your breast milk, you can ensure that your baby will still receive all the nutrition they need.

Breast milk provides magical benefits:

Human milk is the ideal food for your baby!
It contains healthy fats and proteins that can help support your baby's overall health and well-being.

Important to know:
There are benefits for you too! Producing breast milk can help regulate your hormones and reduce risks of breast and other cancers. Providing breast milk to your baby can also make you feel empowered as a parent!

Let's get started!
Hand expression can help express colostrum (first milk), but if your baby can't yet breast/chest feed, using a breast pump is best for helping your milk "come in" and, for making a long-term milk supply. If you hand express, make sure you pump afterwards to get these benefits.

Signal your body
Starting soon after you give birth sends a strong message to your body to start producing milk.

Pump often
It is best to pump breast milk at least 8 times in 24 hours (every 2 to 3 hours).

Use Skin-to-Skin
This special way of holding your baby stimulates specific hormones in your body that produces more breast milk. Ask your baby's nurse about Skin-to-Skin.

Colostrum is 'liquid gold' as it has extra health benefits for your baby!
Your breast milk is unique to you, made just for your baby. Even one drop of colostrum has antibodies and healthy bacteria that can boost your baby's health. Ask your baby's nurse or lactation consultant about putting drops of colostrum in your baby's mouth.

Did you know?
As your baby grows, your breast milk will change to meet your baby's needs.

Providing breast milk for your baby is so important. There are many supports available. There are also breast milk donor programs available.
Ask your baby's nurse, or lactation consultant.

Visit us online for more information on providing breast milk plus other useful resources and programs focused on premature babies and their families. [canadianpreemies.org](https://www.canadianpreemies.org)

Thanks to Marianne Bracht, neonatal nurse, and Rebecca Hoban, MD, MPH for the creation and review of this infographic.



Language Development in the NICU

Language development begins in all babies before birth. These language connections can be interrupted when a baby is born early, and their language can take longer to develop.

Understand why, when, and how to communicate with your baby.

Why? Your baby learns about language and communication by listening and watching you.
Talking often to your baby supports this early learning. Here are some important things to know.

When? Learn the signs that your baby is ready to learn, or needs a rest:

Your baby is ready when:

- Making eye contact
- Looking alert, calm
- Turning head away
- Breathing/oxygen level changes
- Crying, yawning, gagging, tongue out
- Bringing hands towards mouth
- Regular breathing, good colour
- Limp, tired, or looking stressed
- Opening eyes very wide, staring
- Arching back, squirming

Your baby needs a rest when:

Did you know?

- ✓ All babies learn to recognize your voice before they are born!
- ✓ By communicating with your baby you will support your baby's premature brain to be able to recognize other familiar voices, stories, and different languages.

At about 33 weeks gestation, your baby can communicate longer without getting overtired.
You can increase the amount of time you talk, read, or sing to your baby, while watching carefully for signs that your baby may need a rest.

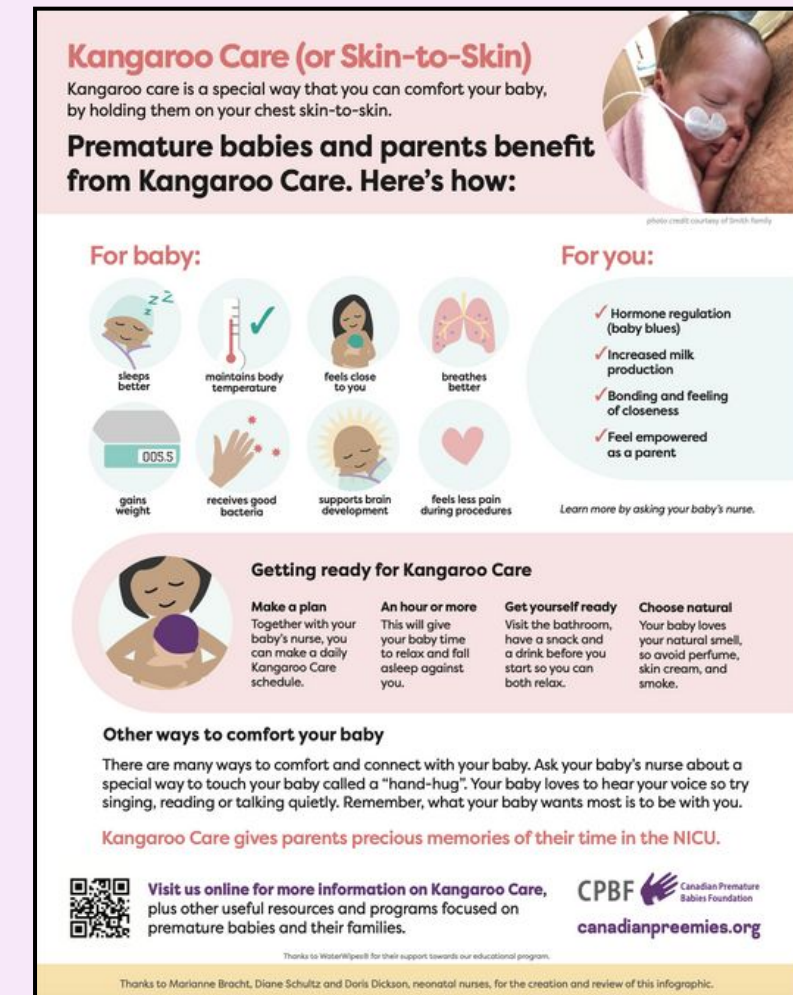
How? You can communicate with your baby by talking, reading books, or singing songs. Your baby loves your voice!

- Talk or sing anywhere.**
While your baby is in their NICU bed, while doing diaper changes, baths, feeds, or while holding your baby.
- Go softly.**
Speak or sing softly, in whatever language you feel most comfortable.
- Repeat often.**
Your baby will learn from hearing the same story or the same song often.
- Use their name.**
Your baby will learn to respond to their name if you use it often.

If you are able to hold your baby, there is a special way to hold skin-to-skin, called Kangaroo Care. Ask your baby's nurse.

Visit us online for more information on Language Development, plus other useful resources and programs focused on premature babies and their families. [canadianpreemies.org](https://www.canadianpreemies.org)

Thanks to Marianne Bracht, Heather Crosswell, neonatal nurses, and Anne Symes, MDCM, MSc, FRCPC for the creation and review of this infographic.



Kangaroo Care (or Skin-to-Skin)

Kangaroo care is a special way that you can comfort your baby, by holding them on your chest skin-to-skin.

Premature babies and parents benefit from Kangaroo Care. Here's how:

For baby:

- sleeps better
- maintains body temperature
- feels close to you
- breathes better
- gains weight
- receives good bacteria
- supports brain development
- feels less pain during procedures

For you:

- ✓ Hormone regulation (baby blues)
- ✓ Increased milk production
- ✓ Bonding and feeling of closeness
- ✓ Feel empowered as a parent

Learn more by asking your baby's nurse.

Getting ready for Kangaroo Care

- Make a plan**
Together with your baby's nurse, you can make a daily Kangaroo Care schedule.
- An hour or more**
This will give your baby time to relax and fall asleep against you.
- Get yourself ready**
Visit the bathroom, have a snack and a drink before you start so you can both relax.
- Choose natural**
Your baby loves your natural smell, so avoid perfume, skin cream, and smoke.

Other ways to comfort your baby

There are many ways to comfort and connect with your baby. Ask your baby's nurse about a special way to touch your baby called a "hand-hug". Your baby loves to hear your voice so try singing, reading or talking quietly. Remember, what your baby wants most is to be with you.

Kangaroo Care gives parents precious memories of their time in the NICU.

Visit us online for more information on Kangaroo Care, plus other useful resources and programs focused on premature babies and their families. [canadianpreemies.org](https://www.canadianpreemies.org)

Thanks to Marianne Bracht, Diane Schultz and Daris Dickson, neonatal nurses, for the creation and review of this infographic.



<https://www.cpb-fbpc.org/indigenous-families>

Introducing



We've partnered to share **translated, adapted, evidence-based** health information for preemie families.

Support

For families

- Parent Care: Mental Health Program
- Peer Support - virtual weekly peer support group
- Virtual group 24/7

For Healthcare Professionals

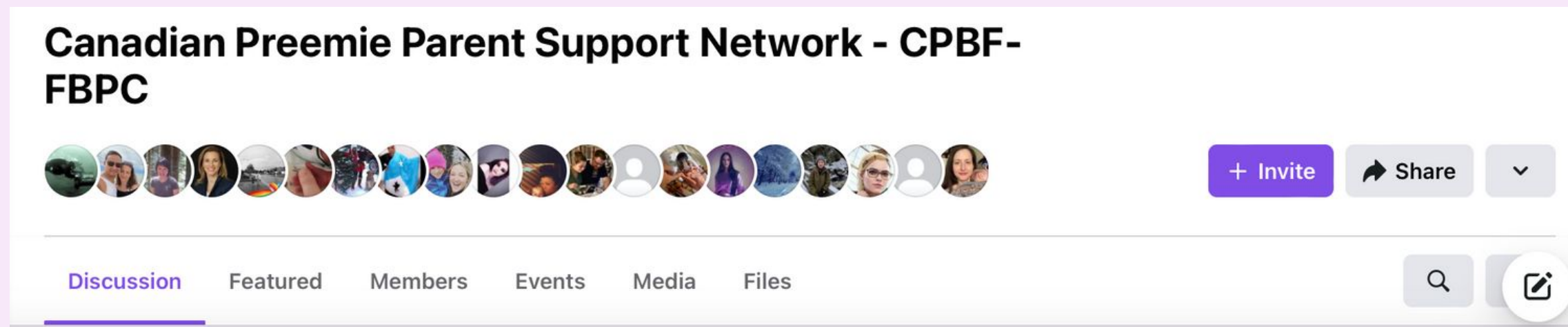
- Peer Training
- ‘Bringing parents back as partners’
Training



We believe in the power of peer support. While we are grateful to all the clinicians and caregivers who helped our families, we recognize that being able to connect with someone who has a similar lived experience is incredibly important.

For that reason, we built [Canada's largest NICU parent support network](#) which is moderated by a group of trained peer mentors.

If you are interested in collaborating on a peer support project, let us know! We have developed a [peer support training module](#) for hospitals, community groups or other institutions, that can be delivered in person or remotely.

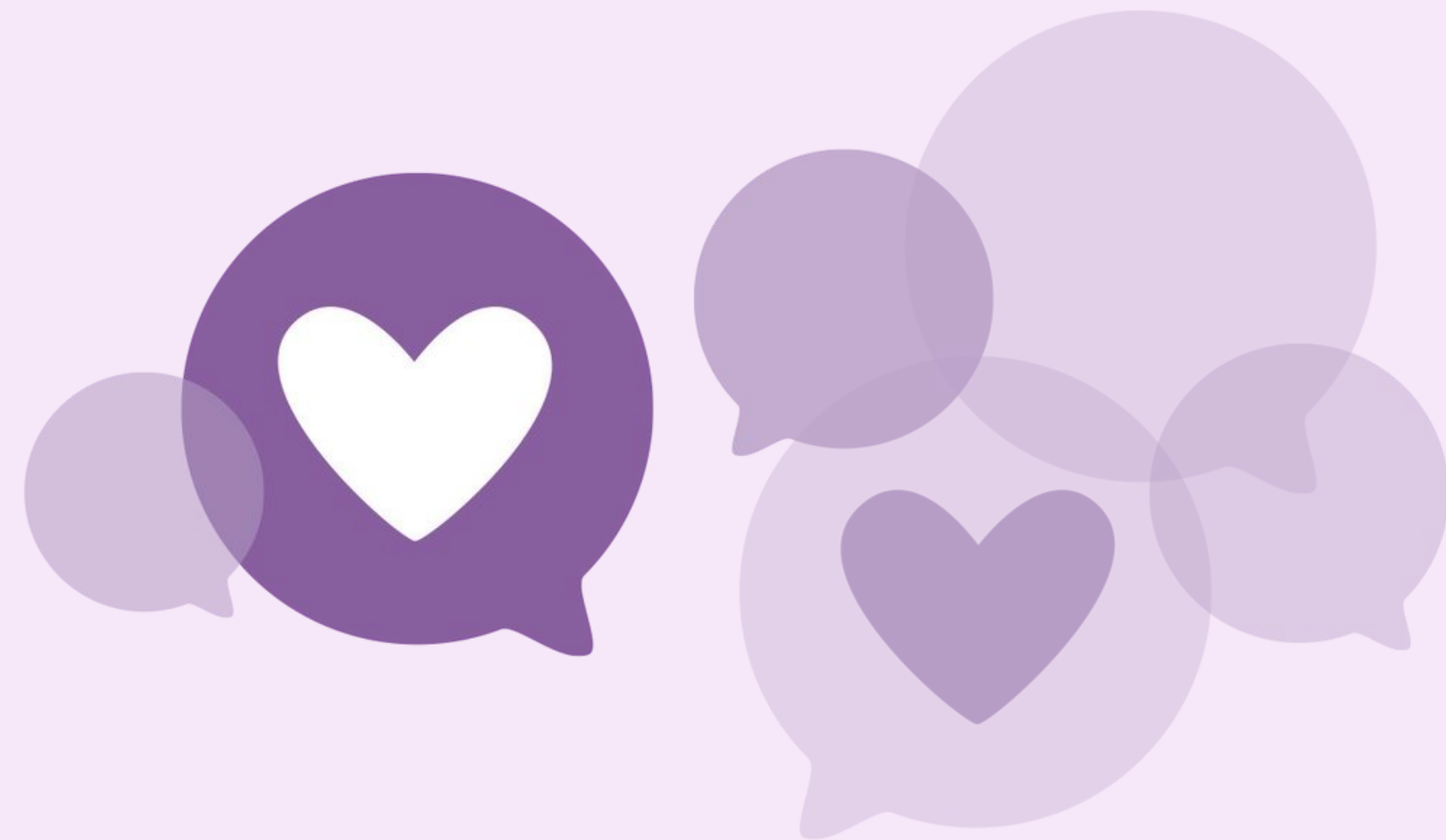






“If you treat a
disease, you win,
you lose; you treat a
patient, I’ll
guarantee you win,
no matter the
outcome.”

~ Dr. Patch Adams



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