

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU)

Parent Buddy Program FAQs

What are the basic expectations of a parent buddy?

Buddies offer emotional and informational support to a current NICU family, and encourage them to become an advocate for their baby (babies).

You are not expected to solve every problem the family you are supporting is facing. Most families just need someone who has been in a similar situation to listen and empathize with what they are experiencing.

Ask the family with whom you are matched how much support they would like and whether they prefer phone, email, or in person contact. Remember to set your own limitations as well such as how often you are available and what hours of the day you may be contacted.

Please do not share information about the family you are supporting with anyone else (unless you need to escalate a situation to an El Camino Hospital NICU staff member who is part of the Parent Buddy Program).

What should we do if the family we are supporting asks for medical advice?

While it is acceptable to share your own NICU journey, please refer all medical decision questions back to the neonatologists in the NICU.

Who should we contact if there is an urgent situation with the family we are mentoring (such as depression, anxiety, or anger requiring intervention)?

If you or someone else is in immediate danger please call 911.

For urgent, non-life-threatening situations, please call the main NICU phone number 24 hours a day and ask to be put in immediate contact with a Parent Buddy Program support person.

Main NICU #: 650-940-7163

How can we meet other Parent Buddies?

The Parent to Parent program will hold a quarterly meeting open to all parent mentors to discuss your experiences with the program. Meetings will be held in the NICU Classroom on the [\(fill in date and times here – or how to get the schedule\)](#).

Are there resources we can provide to the family we are working with or use ourselves to grow as buddies?

March of Dimes "Share Your Story": A community to share your experience with prematurity, birth defects, or loss. <http://share.marchofdimes.org/>

NICU Now Podcasts by Hand to Hold: Designed by and for NICU families. Available on iTunes, Stitcher, and online at Hand to Hold. <https://handtohold.org/resources/podcasts/nicu-now/>

Preemie Parent Alliance: A network of organizations offering support to families of premature infants. <https://preemieparentalliance.org/#>

Support 4 NICU Parents: A resource for families and staff in the NICU to improve family support during and after a NICU stay. Sponsored by the National Perinatal Association. <http://support4nicuparents.org/>

Parent Buddy Program FAQs (cont'd)

Who should we contact if we have additional, non-urgent questions about the mentor program, or if we are feeling overwhelmed by our role in the Parent Buddy program?

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