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## ABOUT OUR NICU

Our new NICU opened in December, 2019. Located on Level 2 of Health Sciences Centre (HSC), Winnipeg Women's Hospital, our NICU cares for the sickest newborns in the province. The NICU staff care for more than 1,400 newborns every year.

Our Level 3 NICU is a 60-bed unit, with both single and double patient rooms. We serve a wide geographic area, including residents of Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario, and Nunavut.

The NICU's patient rooms have their own dedicated family space, which includes a pullout sofa bed for overnight stays and a fridge to store breast milk. Shower and washroom facilities are also nearby within the unit.

The Family Zone, also located within the unit, has lockers, play areas, a TV, and a kitchen area complete with fridge, microwave, toaster and dining space.



## OUR FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM

11 veteran parents; respectively with their own birth and NICU experience. Each volunteer has something unique and different to offer NICU families.

Volunteer shifts are 2-3 hours. Volunteer Ambassadors are available in the unit to visit with families in our Family Zone or bedside. Veteran parents run our book cart 3 times per week to promote reading and language and to support families at the bedside.

4 baby readers; each having 2-hour shifts reading to babies per week.

19 baby cuddlers; each having 3-hour shifts between 0900 and 2000 weekdays, as well as two weekend cuddlers during the afternoon.

Volunteers contribute an average of 230 hours per month.

All of our volunteers are passionate about creating an environment where families feel welcome and supported.



\*photo taken pre-pandemic\*

## NICU GRADUATE FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

We have a graduate parent serving on the Family Advisory Committee for the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation and two graduate parents serving on the Family Advisory Committee for a research project into parent mental health (EIPOP study).

We have added parents to our Gut Health Committee and are working towards having parent participation on more committees.

The Family Support Coordinator participates on Patient Care and FICare Committees. Also participates in NICU nurse orientation to facilitate understanding of the essential value of NICU family involvement in care.



## FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- Weekly Parent Coffee time
- Monthly breastfeeding and pumping drop-in with our dietician/LC
- Monthly lunches funded by the Children's Hospital Foundation
- Celebrations: Kangaroo-a-thons, World Prematurity Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, most recognized holidays
- Annual Holiday Lunch in December
- Milestone Cards and Journey Beads
- Parent information sessions: RSV, OT (safe sleep/feeding), Newborn Follow-Up
- Crafting: Painting baby shirts, scrapbooking
- Reading program
- Constant supply of coffee and snacks!
- "Operation Cheerio", a farewell for our longer-stay babies. Graduation caps made by one of our veteran parent volunteers "from one NICU family to another".
- Soon to be added: dream catcher workshop and monthly massages, both offered by graduate parents.



Our veteran parent, Melanie, crochets in the Family Zone. She finds that it helps parents engage with her and parents find it relaxing to watch. Melanie often gifts her creations to our families to have as keepsakes. She also makes our baby graduation caps.