

Family-based intervention to enhance infant-parent relationships in the neonatal intensive care unit.

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# Family-Based Intervention to Enhance Infant-Parent Relationships in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit FREE

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*Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, Volume 30, Issue 8, 1 December 2005, Pages 667–677, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsi053>

**Published:** 03 March 2005    **Article history** ▼

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## Abstract

**Objective** To examine how family-based interventions in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) may change parental knowledge and behaviors and decrease stress. **Methods** Eighty-four high-risk mother–infant dyads were randomly assigned to two intervention and one control groups. Group 1 ( $n = 28$ ) participated in a demonstration of infant reflexes, attention, motor skills, and sleep–wake states. Group 2 ( $n = 31$ ) viewed educational materials. Group 3 ( $n = 25$ ), controls, participated in an informal discussion. Parent–infant interactions (Nursing Child Assessment Feeding Scale) were videotaped. Mothers completed measures of stress (Parenting Stress Index) and knowledge of infant cues (Knowledge of Preterm Infant Behavior Scale). **Results** Mothers in both intervention groups evidenced greater knowledge and more contingent and sensitive interactions with their infants than did the control group. Stress also differed across groups, and all mothers reported scores above norms. **Conclusions** In a high-risk sample, short-term, family-based NICU interventions may enhance mothers' knowledge, sensitivity, contingency, and stress.

**Keywords:** [NICU intervention](#), [parent–infant interaction](#), [parenting behaviors](#), [preterm infants](#)

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