Neonatal Occupational Therapy

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Starlight Neonatal Unit
Barnet Hospital
Neonatal OT

Why on earth would babies need occupational therapy?
They don’t have an occupation!
What is an OT

Everything in life can be viewed as an occupation.

An occupation can be anything from:
- learning how to get dressed
- Getting into a car
- drinking from a cup
- Riding a bike
- Handwriting

The role of the OT is to help achieve the chosen occupation.
What is an OT

• An OT is trained to understand how physical health impacts on mental health and vice versa.

• An OT understands how the environment impacts on everything we do.

• An OT will never look at an individual in isolation but will understand how family and friendships influence occupation.
What is an OT?

In short they say medicine is about adding days to life.

OT is about adding life to days.

Therefore an OT is an essential part of any Neonatal team.
All developmental needs are met
OT's role is to bridge the gap between the “chaos” of the NICU world and the uterine environment.
The nursery environment...
The NICU environment
Role of the OT

- **FAMILY:** Infant mental health, social emotional development, family support
- **ENVIRONMENT:** does it meet the infant’s developmental, sensory and family needs.
- **NEUROBEHAVIOURAL:** self regulation, coping strategies, avoidance cues, interactive behaviours.
- **NEUROMOTOR:** musculoskeletal/motor development and function.
- **SENSORY:** How do they cope with sensory input.
ROLE OF OT ON STARLIGHT

• 30 bed, level 2, hospital
• 2 days a week
• All babies born under 30 weeks, less than 1000g or who have had an MRI
• Also blanket referral from all NICU MDT
Baby’s occupations in NICU

- Sleep
- Grow
- Feed
- Get to know your family
Parenting Occupations in NICU

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS**

Neuroprotection and nurturing are foundational principles for all parenting tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory Development</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td>Therapeutic Touch</td>
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<td>Understanding behavioural cues</td>
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<td>Hand swaddling</td>
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<td>Skin to Skin</td>
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<td>Promoting non-nutritive suck</td>
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<td>Promote Calm environment</td>
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<td>Therapeutic nappy change.</td>
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<td>Swaddling</td>
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<td>Vestibular/ Proprioception</td>
<td>Therapeutic positioning</td>
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<td>Therapeutic handling</td>
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<td>Chemosensory Taste and smell</td>
<td>Therapeutic smell</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Positive taste experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Breastfeeding</td>
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<td>Bottle feeding</td>
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<td>Auditory</td>
<td>Supporting language development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Protecting sleep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
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<td>Occupations</td>
<td>Dressing</td>
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<td>Swaddled bathing</td>
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<td>Therapeutic massage</td>
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<td>Behavioural states</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>Baby Buddy App</td>
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<td>Caring for your baby in NICU</td>
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<td>BLISS</td>
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Topics Included in Handout

Information from the booklet is presented depending on the gestational age and unique needs of each baby.

- Developmentally friendly environment.
- Kangaroo Care
- Behavioural Cues
- Positive Touch
- Sensory Development
- Behavioural states
- Tummy time
- Positions for play
- Infant massage
Developmental Care

• Monthly developmental care newsletter.
• Training of all staff on developmental care topics.
• Pens and posters introduced.
• Developmental care board in staff room and parents room.
• Developmental care booklets to all parents.
• Dates we celebrate, World prematurity day, Kangaroo Care Awareness day.
• We are currently following 7 neuroprotective core measures. Each core measure has a team of professional, every 4 months the focus changes.
• The Core Measure Committee from January to April 2016 is the Pain and Stress Management team.
Kangaroo Care

Our ‘Skin to Skin’ chairs arrive on October 2nd 2015.

Get ready to celebrate and promote some serious skin to skin.

Training and transfer practice for nurses and parents on October 6th 2015.

“The optimal environment for any newborn, but particularly for the premature infant, is skin-to-skin contact with mother (or father), also known as kangaroo care.”? Altimier and Phillips, 2013)

Date for your diaries: World Prematurity Day November 17th 2015
Top TEN Developmental Care tips for infants on Starlight NNU

1. We practice INDIVIDUALISED DEVELOPMENTAL CARE: care is adjusted to fit baby’s needs that will change throughout the neonatal journey.

2. FAMILY CENTERED CARE: family is the most significant influence on the child’s life. Involve parents at the very start.

3. PROTECT SLEEP: Sleep is essential for recovery and growth and brain development.

4. BEHAVIOURAL CUES: understand behavioural cues (attend training).

5. POSITIONING AND HANDLING: Light feathery touch is irritating, start each intervention with still holding. DO NOT leave the baby looking uncomfortable. If you struggle ask for help. COMFORT, FLEXION, CONTAINMENT, ALIGNMENT.

6. KANGAROO CARE: Has many benefits. Help support Kangaroo Care for a minimum of 1-hour daily.

7. MINIMISE PAIN AND STRESS: ALWAYS provide containment and the opportunity for positive, non-nutritive sucking, give sucrose or breast milk.

8. TASTE AND SMELL: Do not wear perfume or contaminants (e.g. alcohol or tobacco).

9. HEARING: Sleep is essential for auditory development. Keep sound and activity levels to a minimum. Insulate incubator with padded cover. DO NOT place objects on top of the incubator. BACKGROUND NOISE should be below 45dB.

10. VISION: REM sleep is essential for development of the visual system for the preterm baby. Use incubator covers at least until the pupil constricting reflex functions. Daylight is preferable to fluorescent overhead lighting.
# Developmental care committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Committee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan – April 2016</td>
<td>Pain and Stress</td>
<td>Emily, Kat, Kate, Leo, Silvia, Natalie</td>
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<tr>
<td>April – July 2016</td>
<td>Feeding</td>
<td>Emily, Celia, Mandy</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2016- Oct 2016</td>
<td>Family Centred Care</td>
<td>Shanti, Emily, Simon R, Cher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2016- Jan 2017</td>
<td>Positioning and Handling</td>
<td>Emily, Kate B, Sandra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan – April 2017</td>
<td>Safeguarding sleep</td>
<td>Emily, Sandra</td>
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<tr>
<td>April – July 2017</td>
<td>Kangaroo Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>July – Oct 2017</td>
<td>Sensory development and the environment</td>
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If you are interested in any of these topics and would like to be part of the committee, please email Emily (OT)
Parents Coffee Morning

Eat, Chat, Learn

Parents Coffee Morning
Every Tuesday at 11am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26th January 2016</td>
<td><strong>NEONATAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd February 2016</td>
<td><strong>BABY MASSAGE:</strong> learn how to massage your baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th February 2016</td>
<td><strong>FEEDING YOUR BABY:</strong> tube feeds/breast feeds/bottle feeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th February 2016</td>
<td><strong>GETTING READY FOR HOME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>23rd February 2016</td>
<td><strong>TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>14th March 2016</td>
<td><strong>YOUR BABY’S LANGUAGE:</strong> understand your baby’s development and cues</td>
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**Parents Coffee Afternoon**

*Every Tuesday from 12.30 to 13.30* parents are invited to attend coffee afternoon. This is held in the parents’ room and is an opportunity to meet with Cher Johnston (CAMHS nurse) and Emily Hills (OT). This is an informal setting where you can meet other parents and share your experiences or concerns about having a baby in NICU.

**Baby Buddy App**

Baby Buddy is a new fun and interactive app from Best Beginnings that is designed to support you during pregnancy and as a new parent in order to help you and your family give your baby the best possible start in life.

**Skin to skin**

On Starlight Unit we promote family presence and opportunities for skin to skin (Kangaroo care). This activity involves a baby being placed on their mother of fathers’ bare chest. Kangaroo care can help NICU babies in many ways including: regulating their heart rate and breathing, maintaining temperature control, improving growth and weight gain, facilitating better sleep patterns. Please ask your nurse or occupational therapists, if you would like to learn more.

**Bliss Champions**

Visit NICU on: 
Tuesday: 10.30-4.30
Thursday: 7-8.30

**Developmental care**

To help babies’ cope better with their surroundings, each NICU tries to keep environmental stimulation to a minimum. Some ways to reduce environmental stimulation are:
- Dimming the lights
- Keeping the noise level down
- Providing positive touch
- Position and handle slowly, keep your baby flexed, aligned, contained and comfortable
- Avoid wearing perfumes
- Helping each baby sleep so that their brains grow and develop

**Caring for your baby in the Neonatal Unit: A parent’s handbook**

By Inga Warren and Cherry Bond
www.earlybabies.com
£12.50
This book, which we sell on the unit, is for all parents who have babies in newborn intensive care or special care baby units. It gives you information that will help you get to know your baby and to care for them during their time in hospital. Please ask Emily Hills (OT) if you would like further information.

**Parents Supper Club**

All family members are invited to attend our monthly parent’s supper club. Held on the first Tuesday of every month. Our next meeting is on 6th October in the Seminar room at 7pm.

Please come and share food with staff and parents from the Starlight unit. There will also be a short presentation on baby development and the language of the newborn. Please let Fiona Bradish know if you are able to attend.
You are all invited to attend a Parents Evening Class on March 26th at 7pm in the Seminar Room Starlight NICU

The evening will include supper and an opportunity to meet with other Starlight parents.

The evening topic will focus on understanding your baby’s behaviour and preterm development.

We hope you can all make it.

Please let Fiona know if you are able to attend so that we can cater for the right numbers.
Neurodevelopmental Follow up

- Term: NBAS and Prechtl
- 3 months: Prechtl and Bayley
- 6 months: Bayley
- 1 year: Bayley
- 2 years: Bayley and Hammersmith
Little Stars Group Aims

1. To provide support for parents after NICU.
2. To introduce the benefits of baby massage.
3. To provide information and advice on preterm development.
4. To provide information on your baby’s occupations: sleeping, crying, playing and feeding.
5. To discuss concerns about your baby’s digestion.
6. To provide information on your baby’s health growth and development.
# GROUP PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 January 2015</td>
<td>Your baby’s developing brain, behavioural states and learning their language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 January 2015</td>
<td>Your baby’s sensory development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 February 2015</td>
<td>Feeding: tube to breast/bottle to solids</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 February 2015</td>
<td>Issues with digestion: constipation, reflux and colic</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 February 2015</td>
<td>Sleep, play, learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 February 2015</td>
<td>Growth and development after prematurity: prematurity, growth and health, illnesses, colds, flu</td>
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</tbody>
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For further information, please contact:

Emily Hills  
Occupational Therapist  
Starlight Neonatal Unit  
Barnet Hospital  
Emily.Hills@nhs.net

Little Stars  
Starlight Neonatal Unit  
Barnet Hospital

Royal Free London  
NHS Foundation Trust

[Image of STARS]
What is Little Stars?

Little stars is a perfect place to spend some one-to-one time with your baby and get to meet some new friends, who have also spent time on Starlight Neonatal Unit.

We offer a welcoming and relaxing environment where parents and babies can learn a little bit more about each other and feel safe and comfortable to be themselves, while learning about pre-term development.

Baby Massage is a tradition that has been passed down through generations all over the world for centuries. The programme taught at Little Stars is from The International Association of Infant Massage (AIM).

Little Stars group is a weekly class held over 6 weeks and lasts 60 minutes. Each session starts with baby massage and finishes with refreshments and an educational talk specific to preterm health and development.

Group Aims

1. To provide support for parents after NICU.
2. To introduce the benefits of baby massage.
3. To provide information and advice on pre-term development.
4. To provide information on your baby’s occupations: sleeping, crying, playing and feeding.
5. To discuss concerns about your baby’s digestion.
6. To provide information on your baby’s health, growth and development.

What to Bring

Could you please bring:
- Your baby/babies!
- a travel changing mat or towel
- your usual nappy bag

Provided in the group is:
- a bottle of cold-pressed organic oil
- a booklet with all the massage strokes
- hand-outs to support your understanding of preterm development
- refreshments & snacks
Getting to know your baby

At term, the infant brain weighs 300-350 grains and contains 100 billion neurones. They have many more brain cells than they will ever need, but they cannot be used until they are connected to each other. These connections are made when the baby has an experience for example hearing, seeing, smelling, tastes or touching something. If a brain connection is not used then that connection will die away.

Sensory Development
- Touch
- proprioception
- vestibular
- smell
- taste
- hearing
- vision

wait and wonder:
Watch what your baby is doing for them to initiate an action and feel ready for interaction when in a quiet alert state.

Baby Stages
There are six baby stages, you step back as the baby grows.

The benefits of baby massage

Premature babies and massage
Having a premature baby can be a very stressful experience. As parents, you may feel that your baby is doing things that are not normal. Baby massage is a way in which you can feel in control and can help your baby feel better.

Baby massage can help premature babies who have experienced pain. Babies who have experienced pain of touch may have benefited from massage.

International Association of Infant Massage

Baby Massage Course

Parent Handouts

Little Stars
Starlight Neonatal Unit
Barnet Hospital

STARS

Bliss
for babies born too soon,
too small, too sick
Parent feedback

“To be able to come to Little Stars and have you there, a friendly face, but more importantly, an expert, was so reassuring. The first week when we came and you spent a few minutes with each baby getting to know them, their story, their birth age vs corrected age, and then any worries we might have, was absolutely priceless and for the first time since we left Starlight, I felt as though I could really trust the advice I was being given. Having been left on our own, I was constantly checking the Bliss website vs the advice for 'regular' babies, and never entirely sure which portions of the information I should be taking into account; you made me feel so much surer about how to care for my babies and what to expect from them. It was an absolute pleasure to come to the classes each week, and I found myself 'saving up' questions to ask you and the other experts that you invited to join us. I learned so much from my time with you and really am so very grateful.”

Jen mother of Harper and Scarlett