

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Resource Guide



The following resources have been designed to support providers in implementing trauma and resilience informed care with families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

[10 Questions to Ask When Navigating the NICU](#)

Online Tool

Open communication with your healthcare team is essential. Don't hesitate to seek clarification whenever you have concerns or need more information. The NICU staff is there to provide care and support for both you and your baby.

[Addressing Birth Trauma](#)

Online Tool

Traumatic birth can significantly affect the wellbeing of parents and babies, and healthcare providers play a critical role in preventing or mitigating birth trauma. This video emphasizes ways in which providers can recognize risk factors for birth trauma, identify signs and symptoms of postpartum PTSD, and support parents struggling in the aftermath of a traumatic birth.

[Addressing Microaggressions in the NICU](#)

Multimedia Item + Online Tool

Microaggressions may seem subtle and harmless, but they can profoundly impact the emotional wellbeing and trust of NICU families. This handout and video educate about microaggressions and provide microintervention strategies to enhance the quality of care for diverse communities in the NICU.

[Being Responsive to Birth Trauma](#)

Online Tool

Increasing self-awareness can help us better understand our own explicit and implicit biases. Subsequently, we can enhance our understanding of how these biases impact patient care and perpetuate inequitable systems.

[Cultivating Self-Awareness to Address Disparities in Healthcare Settings](#)

Online Tool

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Feeding Newborns: Inclusive Strategies to Build Empathy and Equity With Families

Online Tool

Feeding is a caregiving act that can bring up a wide range of emotions including joy, contentment, guilt, worry, and frustration. Providers and clinical staff can help families practice self-compassion throughout their feeding journey by understanding the history and contexts that inform how families approach infant feeding.

LA County Department of Children and Family Services' Newborn Risk Assessment For Substance-Affected Newborns

Online Tool

California state regulations are clear that a positive toxicology screen (either prenatally or at the time of birth) in and of itself does not indicate the need for a report to child protective services. Healthcare providers in Los Angeles County should complete this Newborn Risk Assessment (NRA) for Substance-Affected Newborns developed by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Completing the NRA will help healthcare providers assess for additional risk factors posed by the infant's family and determine if there is a need to consult and/or make a report to the Child Protection Hotline.

Los Angeles County Plan of Safe Care Process Map (Draft)

Online Tool

Los Angeles County has developed this draft workflow to support hospital and healthcare providers in initiating the Plan of Safe Care process in their respective healthcare/hospital settings. Reference this draft process map to see a model of how hospital teams can work together to initiate and implement Plans of Safe Care, and when to notify or make a report to the Child Protection Hotline. Visit supportingfamilies.lacounty.gov/plans-of-safe-care for more information and updates to Plans of Safe Care processes in LA County.

Los Angeles County Plan of Safe Care Template (Draft)

Online Tool

A Plan of Safe Care is a document jointly created by a pregnant or parenting person, their family, and care providers to assist with care coordination for substance-affected newborns or pregnant people using substances. Los Angeles County healthcare providers should help initiate a Plan of Safe Care when indicated and work collaboratively with the family to develop the plan. Los Angeles County has developed this draft Plan of Safe Care Template for healthcare providers to use if desired to initiate the Plan of Safe Care process in healthcare/hospital settings. Visit supportingfamilies.lacounty.gov/plans-of-safe-care for more information and updates to Plans of Safe Care processes in LA County.

NICU Parenting: Coping With Comparisons

Online Tool

This handout outlines several key strategies to help NICU parents cope with comparisons.

Parent Education Moments: Infants

Online Tool

This handout provides a list of topics that frequently arise during discussions with families, and the guidance recommended by the Family Development Program to support and educate them.

Providing Support for Postpartum Anxiety

Online Tool

Postpartum anxiety is intense worrying after the birth of a child that interferes with daily life. It is a common and treatable condition. Here are some tips for providing empathic, effective support.

Recognizing Birth trauma

Online Tool

This handout explains that giving birth can be tough not just physically, but emotionally, too. While in some, but not all, cases, birth trauma can lead to the development of postpartum post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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Recognizing Postpartum PTSD

Online Tool

Having a baby can sometimes lead to unexpected emotional challenges. This handout helps explain the signs of postpartum post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and how you can help the birthing parent and/or partner.

Resource Lists for Parents & Caregivers

Online Tool

A curated list of resources recommended by the providers at the UCLA Family Development Program to support parents and caregivers as they navigate the postpartum period and beyond.

- [**Resources for Feeding & Sleep**](#)
- [**Parent/Caregiver Resources for Social-Emotional Development/Behavior Management**](#)
- [**Parent/Caregiver Resources for Transition to Parenthood and Special Needs Parenting**](#)
- [**Parent/Caregiver Resources for General Child Development**](#)

Returning to Work With a Baby in the NICU

Online Tool

This handout addresses the challenges of returning to work while a baby is in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), and offers strategies for coping with complex emotions and practical needs. It emphasizes self-care, maintaining a connection with the baby, and navigating work-related issues.



Supporting Pregnant and Parenting People Struggling With Substance Use Through Plans of Safe Care

Anytime Session

This Stress, Trauma, and Resilience (STAR) Seminar summarizes the Los Angeles County Plans of Safe Care process and provides participants with tools and resources to initiate Plans of Safe Care from healthcare and hospital settings. This training integrates the latest research on substance use, pregnant and parenting people, and mandated reporting. Los Angeles County's overarching goal with Plans of Safe Care is to ensure that pregnant people using substances and infants with prenatal substance exposure and their caregivers are assessed for strengths and needs as far upstream as possible, and then are referred/linked to community-based services.

Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse NICU Families

Online Tool

NICUs serve families from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This handout outlines multiple strategies to support families who speak languages other than English.

Safe Sleep Conversations

Multimedia Item + Online Tool

Caregivers and providers both want babies to thrive. This video and handout highlight some ways to set the stage for culturally sensitive sleep conversations, and how to find common ground for supportive and effective information sharing.

Supporting Dads in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

Resource Collection

Parents with a baby in the NICU can feel pulled in multiple directions. Providers have the power to shape the experiences of NICU parents. This collection emphasizes ways to provide support to Dads through self-care and social support tips and resources, including ["But what about Dad?" A Guide to Supporting Dads During the NICU Journey](#), [Dads in the NICU: Taking Care of Yourself and Seeking Support](#), [Supporting Dads in the NICU: Tips for Friends and Family](#), [Supporting Dads in the NICU: Tips for Partners](#)

* A Wellbeing For LA account is required for access. Set up your free account or log in by visiting: learn.wellbeing4la.org.

Sharing Your NICU Story

Online Tool

Sometimes, people want to know about your baby's time in the NICU. It's okay to share, but it's also okay to keep things private. This guide can help you decide how you want to share your story.

Supporting Siblings of NICU Babies: A Family Guide

Online Tool

This handout is a family guide for supporting siblings of neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) babies. It provides strategies for communication, bonding, and coping.

Understanding a Baby's Cry: How to Support Caregivers

Online Tool

Anyone who has spent time caring for a baby knows that they cry, but some babies may cry more than others. Although this can be a normal part of their development, it can become overwhelming for caregivers. Providers can use this tip sheet to help caregivers feel more informed and confident when caring for a frequently crying baby.

When New Parents Have Trauma Histories: Recognizing and Responding With Sensitivity

Online Tool

Past experiences can shape the way caregivers approach the addition of a new baby. This handout gives insight into common trauma signs caregivers can experience and tips on how to respond with compassion and support.

Strategies for Preventing and Addressing Birth Trauma

Online Tool

This presentation from the UCLA Family Development Program is designed for professionals to use when presenting on the complexities of birth-related psychological distress. It equips providers with the knowledge and tools to recognize risk factors for birth trauma, identify signs and symptoms of postpartum post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and support parents struggling in the aftermath of a traumatic birth.

Self-Care Tips for NICU Families

Online Tool

This handout provides practical strategies and emotional encouragement for families navigating the challenges of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

The **UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence** provides training, resources, consultation, and learning communities to support workforce wellbeing in Los Angeles County.

