

Overall Project Goals:

Partner with Reach Out and Read of the Carolinas to create a culture of early literacy and language exposure in the NCCC and promote bonding and parental involvement in care through reading aloud.

Specific Aims:

1.) Increase the percentage of NICU inpatient days an infant is read to by anyone to 75% of inpatient days within 12 months

2.) Increase the percent of visit days* read to by a parent/caregiver to 75% of visit days within 12 months

*visit days denotes days the parent/caregiver visits the infant in the NCCC

Primary Drivers

Parental Visitation

Parental Involvement in Their Baby's Day-to-Day Care

Parents Encouraged to Read to Their Infant in NCCC

Availability of Appropriate Books and Reading Material in NCCC

Secondary Drivers

Access to transportation

Travel expense burden (e.g. gas, hospital parking fees)

Adequate space at infant's bedside

Complicating social factors, e.g. parent/caregiver substance use, parental incarceration, custody issues

Infant critical illness may limit parental role in care

Distance from home and access to nearby accommodations, e.g. Ronald McDonald House

Sibling visitation policy during Influenza/RSV season

Other parental obligations, e.g. work, primary caregiver for other children in the home

Parent knowledge and attitudes around reading aloud to their baby in NCCC

Staff availability to educate parents about the benefits of reading aloud to baby

Staff knowledge and attitudes around reading aloud to NCCC infants

Presence of visual cues and reminders about reading aloud

Limited family funds to purchase books

Books provided to families at the agreed-upon intervals

Availability of picture books for families with low literacy

Availability of books in parents' native language

Potential Change Concepts

Create a Culture of Reading Aloud

- Encourage parents to visit as often as possible and read to their baby at each visit.
- Involve fathers/male caregivers
- Provide books in English and Spanish and picture books
- Create recordings of parents reading a favorite book to be played to infant when parent not present/able to visit
- Involve siblings (find a sibling book source)
- Staff/providers to model reading aloud to babies and celebrate when families read to their baby
- Daily discussion of infant's ROR status on rounds (diagnosis code Z91.89 to be added for all NCCC patients)
- Train NICU "cuddlers" to be NICU readers

Education

- Partner with Reach Out and Read of the Carolinas in the creation of NICU-specific anticipatory guidance; make training available to NCCC staff and providers
- Educate providers and staff about the benefits of reading aloud/language exposure for NCCC patients and the implications for future brain and language development
- Partner with NCCC Developmental Committee to teach parents developmentally appropriate care for their baby and incorporate reading into parent's daily routine. Teach parents to learn their baby's cues, e.g. when it might not be a good time to hold or stimulate their baby

Visual Cues and Reminders

- Place reminder signs at bedside: "Have you read to me today?" (to be created by FAB)
- Bulletin Board outside and within NCCC with information about ROR, photos of providers reading children's books
- Place ROR informational posters/signs/reminders in Lactation Rooms, at handwashing stations, and in Pods
- Provide monthly ROR Newsletter to staff/providers with updated progress of project/run charts

Sustaining at Discharge

- Send parents home with a ROR calendar to track their reading patterns after discharge
- Enroll babies in Dolly Parton Imagination Library at discharge
- Reinforce the importance of reading in SICC