



NICU Parent Supporters
*We don't have all the answers,
but we understand the
questions.*

**If you would like to be paired
with a NICU Parent Supporter,
ask your baby's nurse for a
referral form.**

**If you have questions about the
program, please email
nicusupp@uw.edu.**

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC staff are also available to help.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606

Parent Support Network email:
nicusupp@uw.edu

Parent Support Network

*Emotional support for
parents with a baby in the
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit*



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The Shock of a Premature Birth

If you're like most NICU parents, you never expected your baby to need intensive care. Now your child is receiving the best possible medical care, but what about you? Where do you go for support?

The Parent Support Network in the NICU at the University of Washington Medical Center is a group of alumni parents of the NICU. They are committed to helping support our current parents through their NICU journey.

While no one can predict the future, it can help to talk with others who have faced challenges that are similar to yours. Parent Supporters can share their experiences with you and let you know you are not alone.

The Process

If you ask to talk with a Parent Supporter, one will be paired with your family based on your need.

Some Parent Supporters come to the unit as a resource for families who simply want to talk. These NICU alumni may check in with you and ask if you would like to talk. You can see a monthly schedule of when a Parent Supporter will be on the unit on the "NICU Family Activity Calendar" in your baby's room.

If you are interested, we can also pair your family with a Parent Supporter who dealt with similar issues when their child was in the NICU. This person will provide more ongoing contact and support through visits, phone calls, and emails. Some of our Parent Supporters do not visit the unit, but offer their support through emails and phone calls.

Learning to Cope

Many parents wonder how other parents coped while they were in the NICU. If you are wondering how others made it through their experience, ask about being paired with a Parent Supporter.

Parent Supporters can offer support as you think about issues such as:

- How do I balance the need to go to my job and take care of other responsibilities with my longing to be with my baby?
- How can I be a parent when my baby is hooked up to so many machines?
- I barely manage to get through the day. How do I find the energy to pump breast milk?

Caring for Your Family

In the NICU, your baby's medical care is your first priority. But, having a baby in the NICU affects every part of your life.

You may have concerns about the effects on your other children or your marriage, or you may wonder how to take care of a child with special needs as a single parent. Questions such as, "My spouse and I are dealing with this very differently. How do we come together?" and "What do I tell my other children?" are often best answered by parents who have dealt with the same concerns.

