

Reading Tips

For a NICU Parent

Medical experts want *babies to hear their parents' voices*. They also tell parents that babies need quiet time. The NICU staff will teach you “cues” that help you understand your baby’s feelings. These cues tell you how much activity your baby can handle at one time.

When you choose to read to your baby:

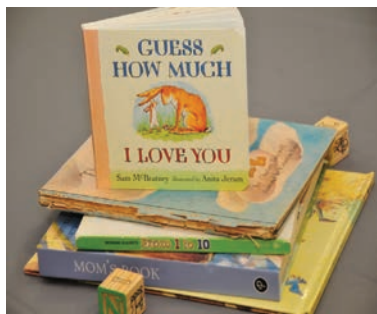
- Ask the nurse if it is a good time to read.
- Use a soft, quiet voice.
- Read the words or talk about the pictures.
- Keep your reading time short – just a few minutes.
- Watch your baby as you read. If she shows sign of distress, *stop*. Let her rest.

When your baby needs some quiet time, she may:

- Arch her back,
- Turn her head away,
- Seem fussy,
- Extend her arms and legs and jerk,
- Yawn, sneeze or get hiccups,
- Cry,
- Gag, or
- Fall asleep.



Reading aloud to your baby creates memories that last a lifetime.



Reading Connects



You and Your Baby

Your baby needs the special care of the NICU staff. He also needs his parents. Even if you cannot provide hands-on care, you can read books to him – in the isolette or in your arms.



A parent's voice can cause a baby's response as early as 3 days of life. *Babies love both mom's and dad's voices.* Reading to your NICU baby is a special time for both you and your baby. It helps you and baby connect and feel close.



Whether you just read the words or talk about a book, your voice lets your baby know you are close.

Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

