

Early Childhood Services: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Effectiveness, Mar 2008, vol. 2 , no. 1 , p. 1-19, ISSN: 1559-9647. Publisher: Plural Publishing Inc., US.

Newborn Individualized Developmental Care Assessment Program (NIDCAP): Changing the future for infants and families in intensive and special care nurseries.

Abstract

The prematurely born infant exchanges the womb for the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at a time of rapid brain development. The mismatch of brain expectation and NICU environment compromises early brain development. Preterm infants add disproportionately to the cost of medical care and developmental disability services. The Newborn Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP) prevents many of the sequelae of prematurity. It avoids overstimulation, stress, pain, isolation, and deprivation, and supports self-regulation, competence, initiative, and goal orientation, tailored to each infant's thresholds of neurointegration. Research demonstrates that NIDCAP improves brain development, functional competence, health, and life quality for preterm infants and their families. It is cost effective, compelling, humane, and ethical, and promises to become the new standard for all NICU care.