

Thematic Brief: Nurturing care for every newborn

Citation:

World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group. Nurturing care for every newborn (in progress). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021.

Abstract/Summary

The first hours, days and weeks after birth are a precious time for a newborn's survival, health and development. Knowledge and tools are available to provide every newborn with nurturing care that involves parents and other caregivers directly. To create the enabling environment for providing such care, there is a need to invest in policies, health systems and community awareness. As more newborns survive, we now need to make sure that they also thrive. This is especially important for those at greatest risk: small and sick babies who are more likely to die or suffer more illness. This Thematic Brief summarizes why nurturing care is essential for every newborn. Nurturing care comprises five interrelated and indivisible components: good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning. The first hours, days and weeks after birth are a precious time for a newborn's survival, health and development. Nurturing care happens when we maximize every interaction with a child. Every moment, small or large, structured or unstructured, is an opportunity to ensure children are healthy, receive nutritious food, are safe and learning about themselves, others and their world. What we do matters, but how we do it matters more. Nurturing care protects children from the worst effects of adversity and produces lifelong and intergenerational benefits for health, productivity and social cohesion.

Comment

Nurturing care for early childhood development <https://www.who.int/activities/addressing-nurturing-care-for-early-childhood-development> is a very important work developed in collaboration by World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group – all organizations of course with very high credibility and impact. This is their thematic brief of nurturing care of the newborn planned to be published in July 2021.

Many of us in NFI have substantially contributed to this important document through the work with the EFCNI standards of IFCDC (Infant- and Family Centered Developmental Care) or directly by submitting narratives and pictures from clinical practice of NFI affiliated NICUs. This document could play a very important role in enhancing the dissemination of the key values and recommendations of NFI globally in low- and middle- but also high-income countries.

In reviewing the manuscript, I noticed an incorrect passage on page 8 final paragraph and I hope this will be corrected before publication. If not, here is my comment:

"Mother-newborn couplet care, meaning that the mother stays together **and get her own medical care together** with the baby in neonatal intensive care units, has been ~~pioneered in Estonia~~ and ~~widely~~ practised in Scandinavia ~~and other high-income countries~~. (New Ref) New evidence from Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi and Nigeria shows that this approach is also feasible and highly effective in low- and middle- income countries (17)."

**The coupling of the medical care of the mother and her baby is the key!!
This was not introduced in Estonia and is still not widely practiced in Scandinavia**

New Ref: Klemming S, Lilliesköld S, Westrup B. Mother-Newborn Couplet Care from theory to practice to ensure zero separation for all newborns. Acta Paediatr. 2021.

I hope you will find this document useful in your NIDCAP practice.

Björn Westrup
Co-director Karolinska NIDCAP Training & Research Center
Dept of Neonatology; Astrid Lindgren's Children's Hospital
Karolinska University Hospital
Dept Women's & Children's Health, Karolinska Institute
E-mail: bjorn.westrup@ki.se