	Closed eyes and sleeplike withdrawal
	Abrupt state changes
	Signs of stress when presented with more than one type of stimulus at a time

Data from Bradley C, Ritter R: Developmental care for the sick and preterm infant. In Kenner C, Lott J, editors: *Comprehensive neonatal care: an interdisciplinary approach,* ed 5, New York, 2014, Springer; Gardner SL, Goldson, E: The neonate and the environment: impact on development. In Gardner SL, Carter BS, Enzman-Hines M, et al, editors: *Merenstein and Gardner's handbook of neonatal intensive care,* ed 7, St Louis, 2011, Mosby/Elsevier; Lin H-C, Huang L-C, Li T-C, et al: Relationship between energy expenditure and stress behaviors of preterm infants in the neonatal intensive care unit, *J Spec Ped Nurs* 19(4):331–338, 2014.

When infants are recovering and are free of support systems, medically stable, and on room air or smaller amounts of oxygen, they are assessed to document behavioral state organization and ability to self-regulate. When the infant is stable and mature enough to begin developmental intervention, activities are individualized according to each infant's cues, temperament, state, behavioral organization, and particular needs. Intervention periods are short (e.g., 2 to 3 minutes of voices, 5 minutes of quiet music). Hearing and vestibular interventions are initiated earlier than visual stimulation. One type of intervention at a time is applied to document the infant's tolerance and response (see Nursing Care Guidelines box). An intervention program for convalescing infants includes parents and siblings early in the infant's hospitalization; teaching parents to be responsive to the infant's individual cues is an important function of the NICU nurse. Parents, siblings, and health care providers are encouraged to adhere to the established developmental care plan to avoid disruption in sleep–wake cycles and minimize inappropriate stimuli.

Nursing Care Guidelines

Developmental Interventions

General Guidelines

Individualize interventions for each infant.

Offer stimulus only during periods of alertness.