

* Any deviation from this list or suspicion of poor newborn adaptation should be immediately reported to the practitioner.

Despite the changing spectrum of well-newborn health care, the nurse's role continues to be that of providing ongoing assessments of each mother–newborn dyad to ensure a safe transition to home and a successful adaptation into the family unit. The ultimate safety and success of early newborn discharge from hospital are contingent on using clear discharge criteria and having a high-quality early follow-up program.

With family structures changing, it is essential that nurses identify the primary caregiver, which may not always be the mother but may be a father, grandparent, or babysitter. Depending on the family composition, the mother's primary support system in the care of the newborn may not always be the traditional husband or male companion.

Nurses should not assume that terminology associated with mother–infant care is understood. Words relating to the anatomy (e.g., *meconium*, *labia*, *edema*, and *genitalia*) and to breastfeeding (e.g., *areola*, *colostrum*, and *let-down reflex*) may be unfamiliar to mothers. Mothers with other children do not necessarily understand more words, and younger, less educated mothers may be at particular risk for not understanding teaching.

An essential area of discharge counseling is the safe transportation of the newborn home from the hospital. Ideally, this information should be provided *before* delivery to allow parents an opportunity to purchase a suitable infant car safety seat. When purchasing a car safety seat, parents should consider cost and convenience. The convertible-type seats are more expensive initially but cost less than two separate systems (infant-only model and infant-toddler convertible model). Convenience is a major factor because a cumbersome restraint may be used less often or used improperly. Before buying a car safety seat, it is best to look carefully at different models. For example, some types are too large for subcompact cars. Asking friends about the advantages and disadvantages of their restraints is helpful, but borrowing a car seat or purchasing a used one can be dangerous. Parents should use only a restraint that has directions for use and a certification label stating that it complies with federal motor vehicle safety standards