

Baby Comfort Care Volunteer in NICU – Volunteer Role

This guideline is intended to provide information for volunteers participating in the NICU baby Comfort Care Program.

Policy

- Volunteers must complete the SPH volunteer orientation and an additional NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) orientation ([Appendix B](#)/ [Appendix C](#)) prior to being accepted as volunteers in the SPH NICU
- Prior to volunteering in the NICU all volunteers must complete immunization screening with Occupational Health and Safety
- Volunteers in the NICU will only provide comfort measures for babies that are enrolled in the Baby Comfort Care Program.

Need to Know:

- NICU volunteers must be screened for up-to date immunizations by Occupational Health and Safety prior to participating in the Baby Comfort Care program. Required immunizations include:
 - Influenza
 - Hepatitis B
 - Varicella
 - MMR
 - Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis
 - TB Skin Test
- NICU volunteers will provide comfort measures for a select group of babies in the NICU. The comfort measures include:
 - Developmentally supportive holding/cuddling and social interaction.
 - Facilitated tucking and offering soothers/pacifiers to babies
 - Developmentally supportive holding/cuddling and social interaction for outpatient twin siblings and other siblings.
- CPAP/Ventilated babies and ill babies are not eligible for the comfort program
- Ongoing RN Supervision will be provided at all times
- See [Appendix C](#) for an overview of volunteer orientation/education.
- See [Appendix A](#) for an orientation checklist for new volunteers.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Volunteers will notify the NICU by calling 604-682-2344 #62397 if they are ill and unable to attend their shift.
- Volunteers will not come to the NICU if feeling unwell.
- Volunteers adhere to all NICU hand washing and infection control practices (see [Appendix A](#))
- Volunteers will wear hospital issued identification at all times

B-00-07-10059 – Comfort Care Volunteer

- Volunteers will receive notification from NICU staff when a baby is identified as eligible for the comfort care program
- Volunteers will check with RN before handling any infant confirming that parental consent has been obtained (noted on the whiteboard).
- RN will provide direction to the volunteer regarding any special instructions and assist the volunteer in order to ensure safe transfer of baby from crib/cot to arms and back to crib/cot.
- Volunteers must read the information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and acknowledge their understanding of their privacy obligations by signing an approved Confidentiality Undertaking or other agreement deemed applicable by PHC
- Volunteers will be required to reaffirm their understanding of and commitments to upholding confidentiality on a regular basis as determined by PHC.
- The Volunteer will notify the RN if the baby is not tolerating handling or if assistance is needed.

Steps for holding a baby in the NICU.

- Parents must have the “first cuddle” with their baby.
- The RN will ensure the baby is dressed appropriately e.g. swaddled if necessary.
- The volunteer must be seated while holding the baby and be prepared to cuddle for **at least one hour**.
- The RN will place the baby in the seated volunteer’s arms.
- The RN will check for a safe “cuddling” position. The volunteer will provide appropriate head and trunk support (position may be baby specific).
- After checking with the RN, the volunteer may offer the baby a soother.
- Volunteers may read a story or sing to the baby.
- The RN will return the baby to the crib/cot at the end of the cuddle.
- The volunteer will notify the bedside nurse when she leaves.
- Volunteers may also comfort or settle babies in their cot, crib or incubator when the RN indicates it is appropriate to do so.

Benefits of the Program

For Patients and Parents

- Supports developmental care of the baby
- Support for parents.

For Volunteers

- Role Satisfaction

Program Evaluation

Changes may be made to the program based on the feedback from the parents, NICU staff, the volunteers, or from the NICU Baby Comfort Program Satisfaction survey ([Appendix D](#)).

Persons/Groups Consulted:

Maternity Safety Quality Council
Perinatal Directions Committee
Director Risk Management, Patient Safety and Patient Relations
Coordinator Volunteer Resources
RN, Occupational Health and Safety

Developed By:

Clinical Nurse Leader/Nurse Educator NICU

Created/Reviewed/Revised

June 2015

Appendix A



NICU VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Keeping in touch and informed

- ☐ Identifying families that have opted into the Volunteer NICU Baby Comfort Care Program
- ☐ NICU phone number 604-682-2344, local: 66029
- ☐ Understand NICU comfort care volunteer role

At a glance

- ☐ NICU Tour
- ☐ Varshney and Family Lounge,
- ☐ Maternity staff and public washrooms
- ☐ Public phone location
- ☐ Staff Lounge
- ☐ Manager's office
- ☐ NICU CNL/CNE office
- ☐ Maternity CNL/Educator office

Infection Control

- ☐ NICU Hand Hygiene Zone
- ☐ Flu policy, immunization screening
- ☐ Self-screening/appropriate use of masks (stay home when sick)
- ☐ Essentials of hand washing/use of hand sanitizer
- ☐ **Nail Polish/Gel nails: Cannot be worn in NICU**
- ☐ Cell phone guidelines
- ☐ Gown use (blue and yellow)
- ☐ Isolation guideline
- ☐ Food and drink policy
- ☐ Safety guidelines

Support Services

- ☐ Health Care Team members (allied health, physicians)

Appendix B



NICU Baby Comfort Care Volunteer Program Orientation

Agenda



Date: _____

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Location: NICU: 3rd floor, Providence Building

1:00 pm	Meet at the entrance to the Maternity Centre Welcome and Introductions: Maternity/NICU Manager	5 mins
1:05	Tour of NICU – led by NICU Nurse Educator:	10 min
1:15	Baby Comfort Program Basics	15 min
1:30	Safe Holding and Cuddling Infection Control	20 min
1:50	Confidentiality(social work)	10 min

Appendix C

Baby Comfort Volunteer Program Education Overview

Following volunteer and NICU orientation the volunteer will:

1. **Understand when a baby can be cuddled by a volunteer**
 - With the permission of the parents (or Ministry of Children and Family Development Representative) any baby can be cuddled by a volunteer unless on CPAP/ ventilator or if ill. Usually babies have “graduated” to a cot or crib.
2. **Understand the responsibilities of the volunteers in the Baby Comfort Program**
3. **Understand when a baby can have a volunteer**
 - After parents have had the “first cuddle”
 - no significant episodes of apnea and bradycardia
 - awake or unsettled babies in cribs
4. **Understand the importance of infection control**
 - Hand hygiene before and after holding or comforting a baby
5. **Understand the steps for holding a baby in the NICU**
 - Safe transfer of baby from crib/cot to arms and back to crib/cot by RN
 - Cuddling only when volunteer is seated
 - Ongoing communication with the RN
6. **Recognize basic NICU equipment:**
 - Oxygen saturation probe
 - ECG leads
 - Feeding tubes
7. **Recognize basic cues of stress and stability in the baby**
 - hiccupping
 - yawning
 - sneezing
 - frowning
 - squirming
 - arms and legs pushing away
 - arms and legs limp and floppy
 - skin color changes
8. **Understand basics of the cardiorespiratory monitor and when to ask for assistance:**
 - recognize when the cardiac leads become detached or fall off the chest/belly
 - recognize an oxygen desaturation.
 - recognize when the baby is having difficulty breathing or is choking

9. Understand general safety in the NICU.

- Bedrails up on crib
- Sleeping positions
- Foot stools under chair
- ECG leads not hanging
- Electrical cords off the floor
- Baby not be carried in arms

Appendix D



NICU Baby Comfort Care Volunteer Program Evaluation

Your response to this survey is voluntary but will provide us with important information.

In general, how would you rate your experience with the Baby Comfort Care Volunteer Program

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Is there anything that you would like to share about the Baby Comfort Care Volunteer Program?

Completed by:

- ☐ Volunteer ☐ Parent ☐ Staff member ☐ Other _____