

## **Top 10 things to know about Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy in the NICU**

1. Occupational and physical therapists are professionals trained to work in the NICU. In our NICU, an OT or a PT will see your baby as they are trained to do the same job.
2. Therapists look at a premature baby's muscle tone, joint movement, reflexes, quality of movement, coping skills and how he/she is able to self soothe according to his/her age.
3. OT/PT sees every baby born 32 weeks or younger but sees older infants as needed.
4. Treatments consist of many therapy techniques depending on the baby's needs but often include many of the following:
  - Muscle activity and gentle stretching for brain development
  - Strengthening of head and neck muscles
  - Prevention of deformity
  - Positive touch techniques to decrease risk of hypersensitivity to touch
  - Helping your baby cope with stressors in NICU
  - Helping your baby self-soothe
  - Treatment of deformities
5. Our NICU therapists are all infant massage educators as well. Infant massage is offered weekly in a class format but can also be learned with your baby at the bedside. Infant massage offers many benefits to you and your baby. You will be giving your baby a great gift by learning infant massage!
6. Parent education includes learning about corrected age, infant development, head shapening, tummy time, helping with coping skills and reading stress cues. We encourage parents to observe and take part in treatment sessions.
7. OT/PT works closely with nursing staff and other members of the NICU team to have the best outcome for babies in the NICU.
8. There is nothing better for a baby than a loving bond with her parents and family. A main role of OT/PT is to support this!
9. Comfort and sleep are priceless to healing. OT/PT mainly sees infants before a "care time" for this reason.
10. Favorite Quote: "Fragility and strength are not necessarily opposite. Just look around the NICU. Fragility is often just strength's first teacher."