

“WHEN BIRTH IS DIFFERENT”

**the offer of parent infant support on neonatal intensive
care units.**

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INFLUENCING DOCUMENTS

- The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1001 Critical Days in March 2020
- Bliss National Standards for Neonates
- Ockenden Report



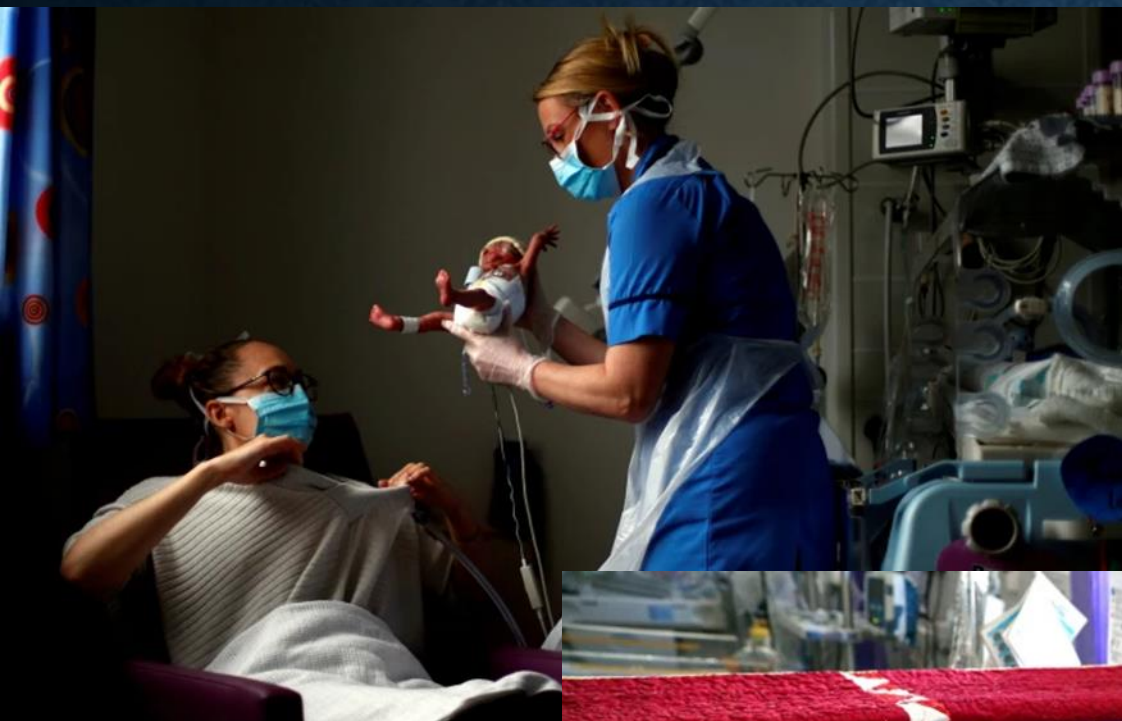
WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ? FAMILIES, BABIES, SIBLINGS, PARENTS GRANDPARENTS

- 9% of all babies born are admitted to NICUs, of then 47% are born at term (37+ weeks)

This includes: Preterm (from 22 weeks gestation)

- Low birth weight (IUGR)
- Jaundice or Hypoglycemia
- Need for surgery
- Congenital abnormalities
- Hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy and respiratory conditions
- Cardiovascular disease





TRAUMA

- Damage to a person's mind as a result of one or more events that cause overwhelming amounts of stress that exceed the person's ability to cope or to integrate the emotions involved, eventually leading to serious long term consequences
- A traumatic event is defined as an event that causes a long-term dysregulation in the autonomic nervous system

The implication of this is that trauma is in the nervous system and body, and not in the event.



BABIES

- Born too soon' or 'Born sick'
- Sensory vulnerability
- Multiple interventions – pain, risk to life
- Separations
- Multiple caregivers,
- Isolation / abandonment
- Vulnerable parents

Impact on the Babies

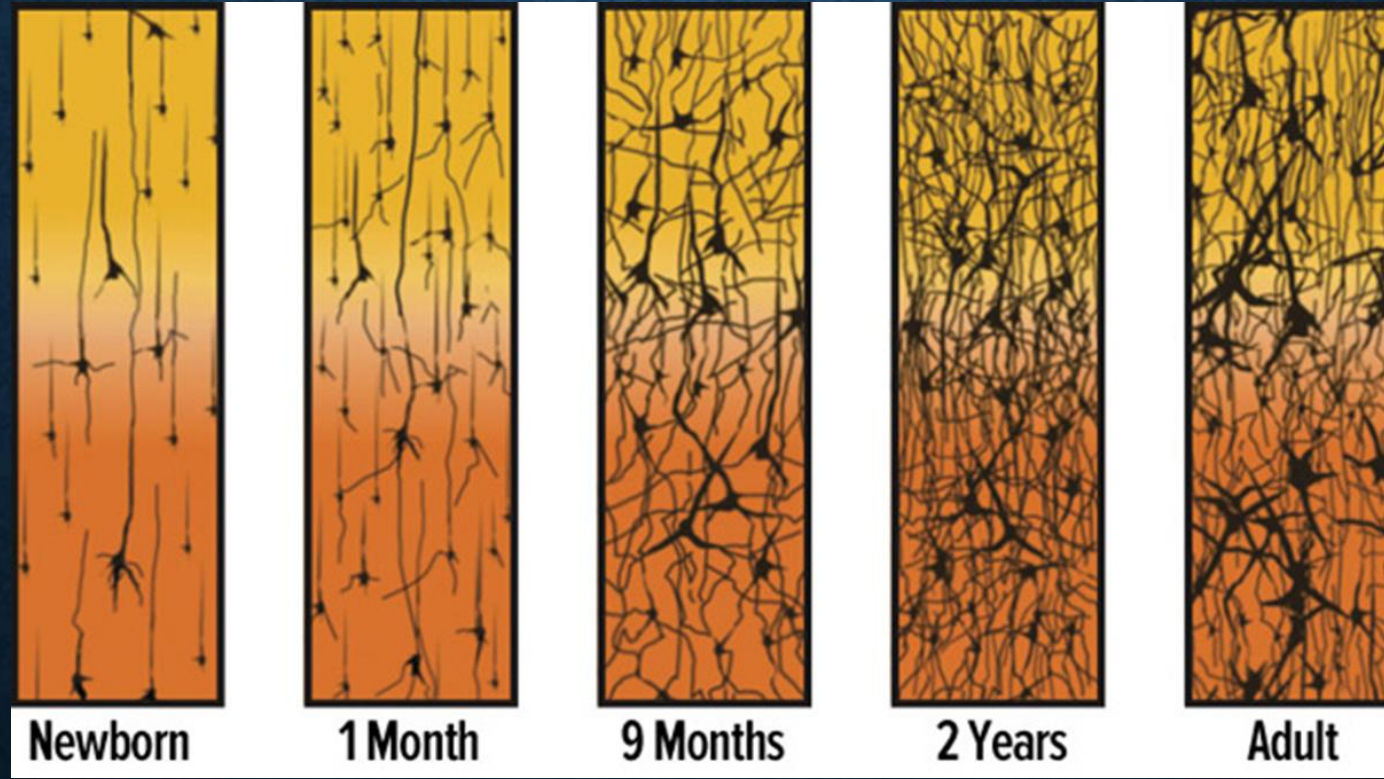
Neuronal Importance and Development of Attachment relationships.

- Our bodies and our environments are sources of sensory information.
- Our bodies and CNS have structures and neurophysiology laid down in our genetics and sculpted by our environments over a lifetime, to detect and process particular physical, chemical, biological information
- Our processing of this sensory information impacts our development, our perceptions, our behaviours, our actions
- Whenever a mother strokes her baby, whenever a father plays with his daughter or son, those physiological acts will be instantly converted to neurohormonal processes that transform the body and wire the brain of the child, TR Verney 2007

IMPORTANCE OF SENSATION

- Keep us safe
- Regulate our body & brain functions
- Regulates alertness levels / attention
- Drive our behaviours
- Drive us to explore & develop perceptions memories and skills
- Build our body and our brain

NEURAL GROWTH DEPENDENT ON INTERACTION WITH ANOTHER



ATTACHMENT- DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE RELATIONSHIPS

- Essential for managing conflicting and difficult emotions which are part of most relationships at some time
- Allows us to modulate and regulate our distress in social situations
- Influences our attitude to neediness and dependence
- Facilitates appropriate help-seeking and care eliciting
- Self soothing and tolerance of embodied distress
- A physiological regulator

PARENTS AND PARTNERS

- Trauma, anxiety & depression
- Adaptation to diagnosis/ disability
- Interrupted transition to parenthood • Inability to 'claim baby'
- Dealing with separations
- Uncertainty
- Witnessing interventions
- Fluctuations, potential loss
- Making difficult decisions
- Caring for siblings
- Financial Worries

STAFF

- Vicarious trauma
- Burnout and moral distress
- Loss and grief when a baby dies
- Fear of litigation
- Less time & capacity to provide psychological support

ACTIVITY

1 session a week delivered to 4 acute hospitals; 2 NICUs and 2 SCBUs

0.5 WTE delivered in addition to one NICU.

- 2021 to 2022 363 families

- 2022 to 2023 510 families

