

A Letter to NICU Families

FROM NAIDA HAWKINS RN IBCLC



My name is Naida Hawkins and I am a registered nurse who specializes in caring for breastfeeding families.

You are most likely reading this because your baby came early or is going to come early. I know from working with countless families that this is an overwhelming time. This is not how we typically imagine welcoming babies.

Moms have told me that they felt their body failed them by not being able to carry their baby to term. They also often talk about how scary it is to start attaching to their baby because you are scared they are not going to make it. Be kind to yourself. You have just gone through a traumatic experience. It is normal to feel overwhelmed. I often tell moms that your body succeeded by carrying this baby for this long!

When it comes to breastfeeding many moms feel skeptical that their body will work properly as it delivered baby early. I think this is so normal to be scared of not having enough milk as we all know someone who tried and tried but never had enough breastmilk. This is a realistic fear but it does not have to be this way! Let me tell you why and how.

How soon your milk comes in and how much milk you will make is dependent on good breast stimulation in the first hour/hours after birth. The most avoidable mistake that parents make is thinking that they have time to work on breastmilk production later. It is best when it is worked at from hour one and becomes way harder to establish as the hours go by. This is truly a case of an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure.

The challenge for NICU families is that baby is not there to help with stimulation. The solution is hand expression of colostrum! Parents doing hand expression in the first hour help the breasts make more milk sooner. It is invaluable if the partner can help.

If you did not know about this and do not have quite enough milk for your baby know that any milk is a gift and that it is not your fault for having not enough milk, but rather you doing the best you could with the information you had. You are a success story!

See our website for more information for NICU families

Take Good Care and Be Kind to Yourself,
Naida

moremilksooner.com

