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Increasing Parent Participation in NICU Care and Preparation for Discharge

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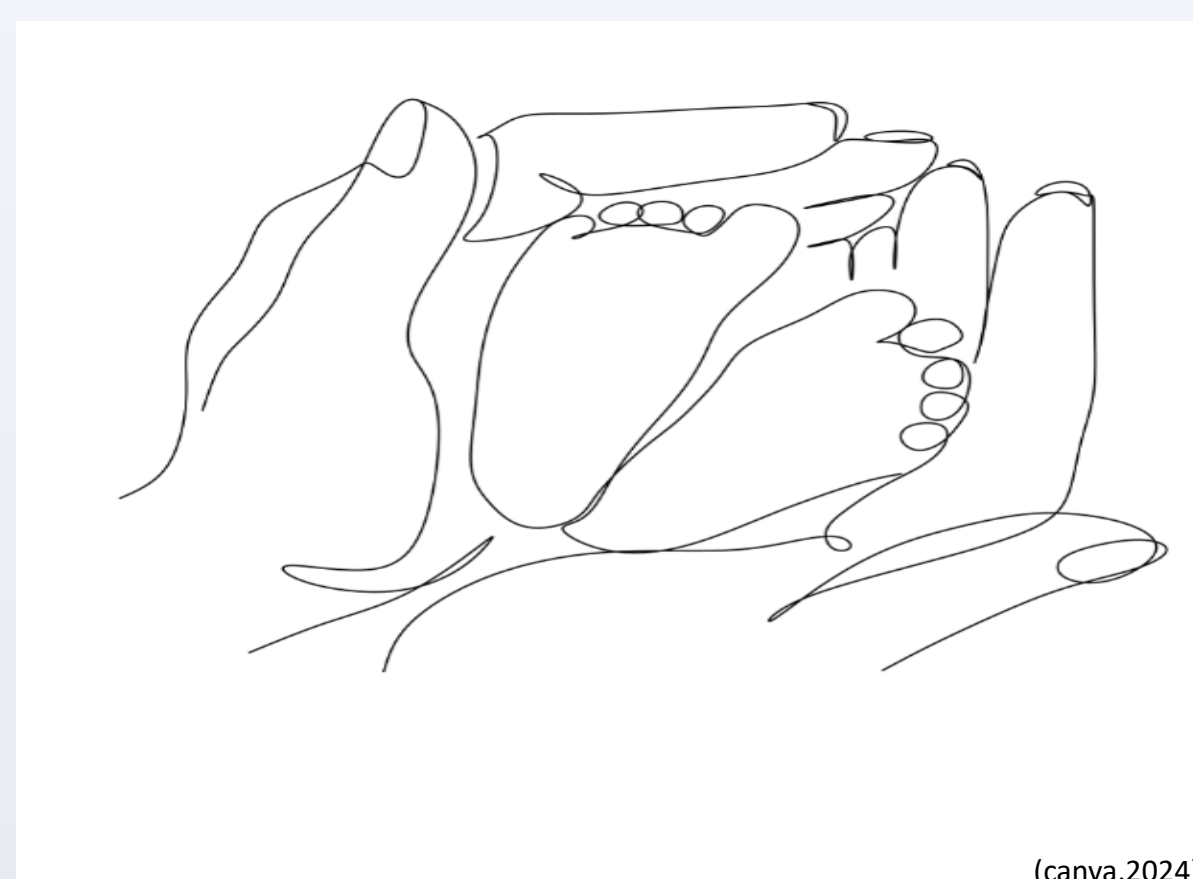
Increasing Parent Participation in NICU Care and Preparation for Discharge

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Doctoral Capstone Mentor: Amanda Pignon OTD, OTR/L NTMC

Site: Nova Southeastern University, Tampa Bay Regional Campus, Clearwater FL (Virtual)

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Introduction

This project aims to find and understand the current knowledge in the evidence that examines the benefits of NICU parental participation specific to NICU care and preparedness for discharge. The aim is to identify sensory activities and strategies that families can incorporate in the NICU, carryover in home, and provide education and accessible resources for non-OT personnel and parents, families, and caregivers from an occupational therapy perspective.

Capstone Site Description



My capstone was virtual focusing on program development and education. The products of the project are to be shared with professionals and families at Bay Care Hospital: Morton Plant Mease in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Summary of Needs Assessment

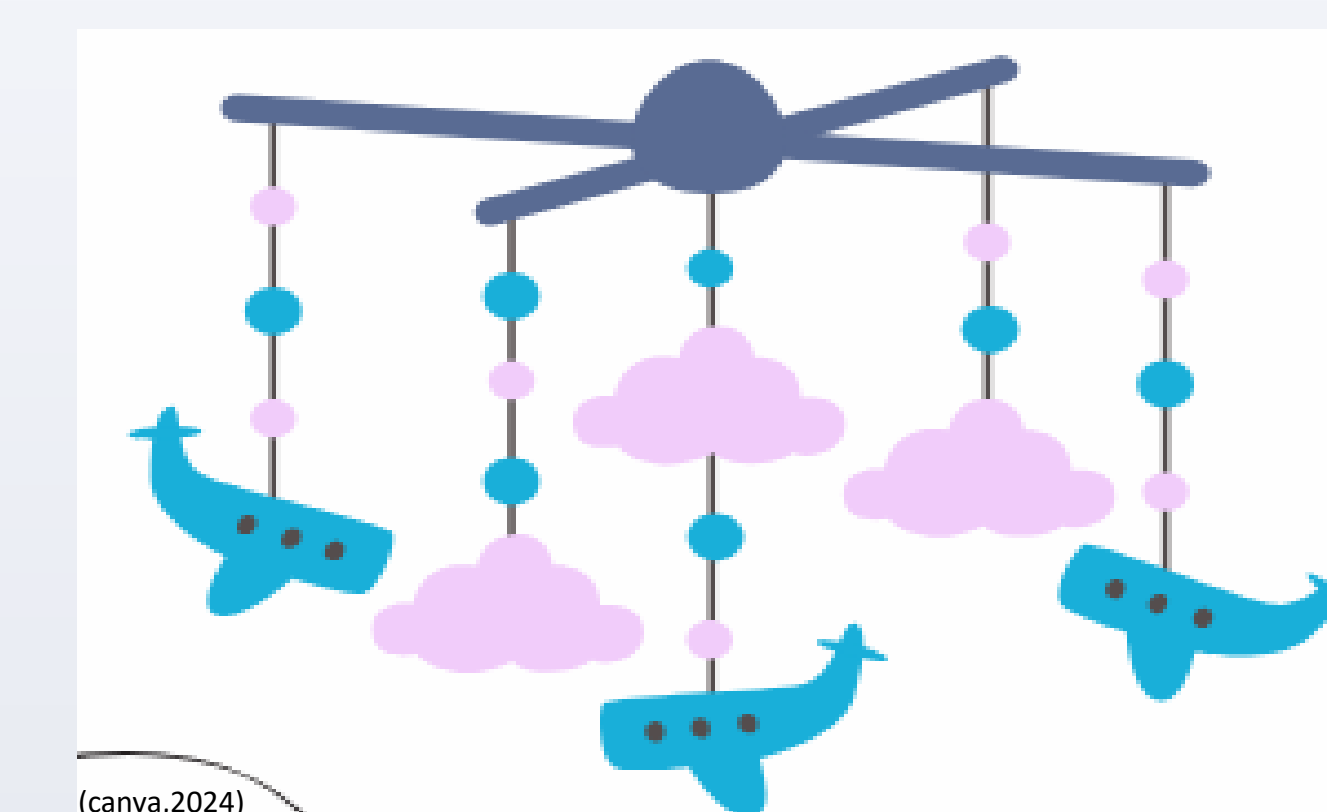
- There is a need for parents knowing how to engage with their infants as an occupation with purposeful activities towards their development (Pineda et al., 2019).
- Most families long to bring their children home but can be intimidated or in a fragile mindset towards their child (Dibari & Rouse, 2023).
- To aid in the transition process from the NICU to the home environment, implementing a collaborative approach with parents to build essential skills and ensure they are educated would be beneficial (DiBari & Rouse, 2023).

Literature Review Summary

- Dysregulating external stimulations can be immediate stressors to the infant and produce physical and neurological responses and delays that manifest in disrupted vitals, poor weight conditions, and delayed development (Painter et al., 2019). Without intervention, long term exposure to dysregulating stimulations can cause a high level of stress on the infant and change the course development.
- Past studies have found family participation in an infant's care to have many positive effects concerning development including increased weight gain, breast feeding rates, reduced length of stay, improved parental confidence and involvement in newborn care, and more (O'brien et al., 2015 as cited in Kubicka et al., 2023).

Capstone Project Description & Outcomes

- Co-occupations in the NICU must be made up of more than oral feeding, socializing, basic caregiving, and holding (Cardin, 2020). Lack of knowledge and clarity of occupation-based neonatal practice seems to be the precursor of parents not knowing how to engage with their infants.
- Understand the dynamics of NICU care, examine family integrated care, sensory techniques and strategies, and the development of pre-term infants through a search through three primary databases. An annotated bibliography was created to understand current evidence and information relevant to premature developmental timelines, sensory strategies, transitioning to home environments, and parent perspectives.
- Handouts revised and created to provide throughout NICU in the hospital setting to families and professionals. The handouts address development by the week from 24-46 weeks (micro prematurity-full term).



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Capstone Goals Achieved

1. Conducted a search through databases to understand prematurity in infants and parent participation from parent and occupational therapy perspective.
2. Revised weekly developmental timeline handouts to address expectations and sensory strategies while admitted in the NICU.
3. Created a website containing information and resources for parents transitioning to the home environment with their infants.

Implications for OT Practice

Placing parents and families at the center of care will help bring benefits to the development of their babies and will suggest a return of holistic intervention rooted in occupation for parents (Cardin, 2020).

Informed family integrated care can lead to clarity and confidence in parents caring for their babies (Goodstein et al., 2021).

The department of NICU can begin to establish a more integral guideline that prioritizes the acknowledgment and participation of parents in the direct care of their infants and provide resources to transition home.

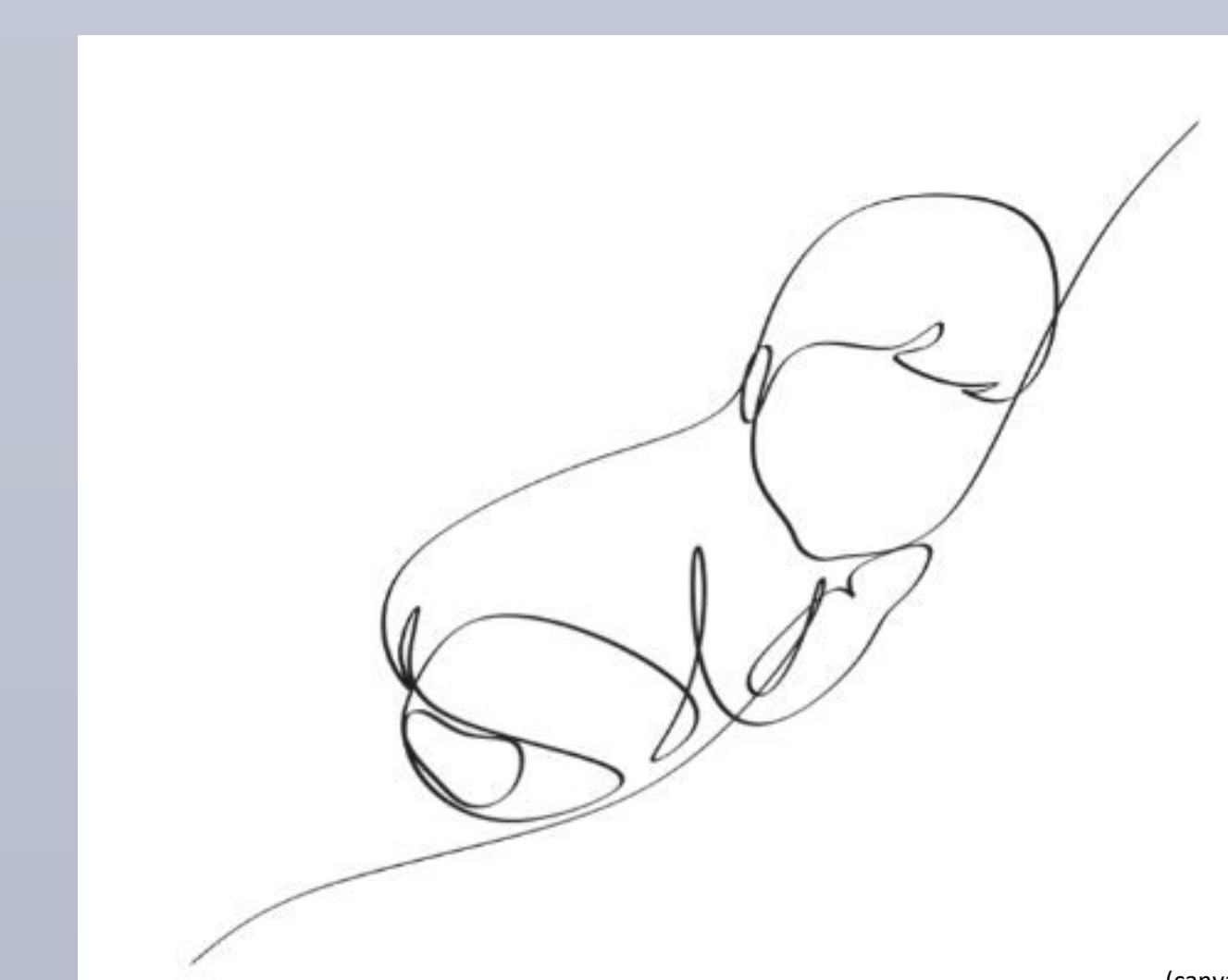
REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to kindly thank Dr. Pignon for her gentle guidance, flexibility, and support throughout this entire capstone project. It would have not been possible without her. References Available Upon Request.

Four handout pages for Morton Plant Mease, each with a QR code and a small illustration of a baby. The pages are titled 'What to expect at 24 weeks', 'What to expect at 26 weeks', 'What to expect at 28 weeks', and 'Growing Bigger!'. Each page contains a list of developmental milestones and 'Things you can do for your baby'.

- Website curated to provides transition resources for discharge such as, developmental checklists, early intervention information, age-appropriate toys, expectations, tummy time, and more.

Screenshot of a website titled 'From NICU to Home'. The website has a navigation bar with 'HOME', 'Link Home', 'Baby Care', 'Parenting 101', 'New Information', and 'Help'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Age-Appropriate Sensory Play' and features a photo of a baby with the text '0-12 Months'. The right column is titled 'Developmental Milestones' and features a photo of a baby with the text 'From NICU to Home'. The website also includes a QR code and a link to 'https://www.novase.edu/parents/transition'.



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