

**Title:** The Importance of Developmentally-Appropriate Positioning in the Neonate Population

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**Audience Type:** Clinical, Nurses, Nurse Educators, Clinicians, Academic

**References:**

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**Abstract Text:**

**Overview:** One of the main philosophies endorsed by Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) across the country focuses on providing developmentally-appropriate care of the neonate. The aim of developmental care is to create an environment that mimics intrauterine conditions for both premature and critically-ill infants, as well as minimize the overall stress of the NICU hospital environment.

**Purpose:** Remaining in line with the recommended care components under the umbrella term, developmental care, helps to reduce hospital-associated short- and long-term complications neonates otherwise would be susceptible to. This research project will focus specifically on the clinical significance and educational components of developmentally-appropriate positioning and its impact on neonate well-being. It is crucial that health professionals and parents are educated on the importance of maintaining the neonate in a position akin to the intrauterine environment until, at minimum, the time frame that would have marked full-term gestation. Evidence-based

research has shown that this critical intervention allows for optimal growth, neural development, weight gain, normothermia, maintenance of proper muscle tone, and reduces the duration of NICU stays (Lucas, 2015).

**Methods:** Two infographic flyers were made, one geared toward educating health professionals and the other toward parents, so both populations can better understand the proper developmental positioning of neonates. Additionally, a to-scale model was created to illustrate the mother's uterine size and the fetus's size at 30 weeks of gestation for further visualization of in utero fetal positioning. These educational tools functioned to give both clinicians and parents different media to interact with to further their understanding of developmental positioning. Data and feedback was planned to be collected beginning in March 2020.

**Results:** Unfortunately, data was unable to be collected due to COVID-19 restrictions in the hospital.

**Conclusion:** No concrete conclusion was able to be made on the basis of being unable to complete the data collection portion of this project. The description, purpose, methods and educational tools created were presented at Fairfield University's 2020 Innovative Research Symposium, to which discussions were held on the basis of this project and its potential impact for health professionals and NICU parents.