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Child Life Services

## While Your Baby Is in the NICU

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When a new baby must be hospitalized, it affects the entire family. At Greenville Health System, Child Life Services is here to help families cope with having a baby in the Bryan Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

### Keep Siblings Involved

For young siblings who have been so excited to meet their new baby brother or sister, this time of separation can be especially difficult. Below are some suggested activities that you can do with your older children to help them cope with having a brother or sister in the NICU:

- Have children draw pictures or make cards that can be hung at your baby's bedside
- Record your older children reading a story for their baby brother or sister
- Take pictures or videos of your baby during visits for siblings to look at
- Create a calendar with your older children to mark special events and progress (such as their visits, baby's surgery, baby taken off ventilator, baby getting a new bed)

Even under normal circumstances, having a new baby brother or sister changes a child's world. Keeping siblings included and connected helps them feel special and shows them they are an important part of the baby's life. Something as simple as having older children help choose the baby's diapers or clothing, or softly reading baby a story can help siblings feel connected.

### Child Life Is Here to Help

Child life specialists are professionals who specialize in infant and child development and who have studied the reactions of infants and children to hospitalization and other healthcare settings. We can provide you with information and resources regarding:

- Coping techniques
- Bonding opportunities
- Handling your premature baby
- How containment helps your baby
- The ideal NICU environment
- Premature behaviors, including stress signals
- Developmental milestone markers

*We are here to support patients and families in the NICU, so please let us know if we can assist you in any way!*

*The Child Life Team*