

Watch Me Grow

PBP: Provide anticipatory guidance regarding the “ups and downs” experienced by many infants and families

Map Phase: Growing Stronger

Source: Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital

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Formal mention of a support or focus group is made in the Growing Stronger phase of the map. The case can be made however, that a focus group can be beneficial to NICU families throughout their hospital stay. This has been demonstrated by the *Watch Me Grow* support group formed in the NICU at Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital.

Watch Me Grow began as a scrapbook/ photo album club, meeting one hour each week. The purpose was to have family members take weekly pictures of their infants, and discuss the events surrounding the photos. The scrapbook format was successful, although funding for the materials became limited, and supplies eventually were depleted. It was noted however, that attendance increased and a greater degree of discourse amongst the group took place.

Presently, *Watch Me Grow* is held weekly on Thursday nights from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM (during evening shift change, at which time visitation is not permitted). A light meal is offered, and all family members are encouraged to attend. The group is facilitated by Shawna Smith MSW, and Rob Hoopes RNC, whose sole purpose is to initiate group discussion and answer questions that relate to their infant. Each person is asked to introduce themselves and talk a little about their child. This generally opens the floor for families to discuss with one another their personal experiences in the NICU.

Family members are informed about *Watch Me Grow* on admission via the JDCH-NICU Family Handbook, a 20” X 40” sign over our entrance area scrub sinks and by word of mouth from staff members. Attendance fluctuates with unit census. Greatest attendance occurs when participants recruit new NICU families. This method also facilitates an informal parent-to-parent buddy system

Recently, an evaluation tool was developed to determine the effectiveness of *Watch Me Grow* as a support mechanism for the NICU families. Twenty-four past *Watch Me Grow* participants answered a ten response survey. Results yielded an overall satisfaction rating of 95.33%

In summary, the benefits of a family support group are evident. On more than one occasion, participants have stated that speaking with others who are experiencing or have experienced similar events, has been very reassuring. There have also been a number of long term relationships established among NICU family members. For these reasons, the NICU at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital will continue the *Watch Me Grow* weekly meetings in hopes that it will benefit many more NICU families.

The Watch Me Grow Weekly Support Group

1. The degree to which *Watch Me Grow* fit in with my schedule.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

2. The degree to which Shawna and/or Rob were able to answer my questions regarding:

a. My infant's disease process.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

b. My infant's course of treatment.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

c. Specific procedures that my infant may have, or has had.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

d. Financial concerns such as Medicaid, RPICC etc.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

e. Preparation for my infant's discharge to home.

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

3. I felt that Shawna and/or Rob listened to what I had to say.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. The presence of other parents experiencing the same or similar circumstances as myself was beneficial.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. Having the *Watch Me Grow* group available, made me feel as though Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital valued me as an individual.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. I would recommend the *Watch Me Grow* group to other parents.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5