



Welcome from New President

Hello and welcome to our Christmas edition of the newsletter! This is my first welcome as President and not the Newsletter editor! I am glad to have that responsibility handed over to Wendy!

There has been so much that has happened since the last issue that I don't know where to begin! Firstly though, I would like to thank Allison in her role as president over the last year.

Well where do I start? I guess from the beginning. As you all know we had our AGM in July and a new committee of old and new faces was formed. With an enthusiastic committee bringing in a variety of skills, much has been achieved in the last couple of months.

We launched our much awaited parent booklets in June/July. These have been well received by everyone and we look forward to distributing these booklets through our parent packs to all families in NICU/SCU at RWH, Monash and Frances Perry. Discussions are underway to distribute at other Level 2 hospitals

We have also had the opportunity to start working with Monash and we had our first morning tea at Ronald McDonald House (behind Monash) on Oct 8th. This was a great success, over 12 families/mums attended. We are in discussions with Monash to finalise details of future morning teas. These morning teas are open to all parents – past and present who have had babies at Monash. If you are a parent of a prem who has had a bub at Monash, please feel free to come along. We would love to see you there!

In September we witnessed the launch of our new look website. This state of the art website has been due to the hard work, time and energy put in by Julia Toivonen, one of the new mums that has joined the committee. Thanks Jules for a fabulous website. It looks FANTASTIC! If you have any feedback/comments on our website, please let us know. We are always looking to improve the information we provide.

If you have looked at our website recently, you will know that we are putting together a coffee table sized book dedicated to our little miracles called 'Lifes Little Treasures'. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the lives of our babies in a collectible format and help support our activities. Have a look at our website for further details.

Lastly (not the least), LLT have joined forces with 5 other support groups in Australia to launch the National Premmie Foundation. The first charity of its kind in Australia! We launched the Foundation at the Pregnancy, Babies and Children's expo in Melbourne 19th-21st Oct. This was a huge success in raising awareness in the community of the journey that babies and families of prems have to face.

We had a new state of the art humidicrib and dolls that were size of babies of different gestation that really helped us to put our message across to the public. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this expo successful!

Finally, I also want to let everyone know that we have our Picnic in the Park coming up on Sunday 2nd Dec. Details are in the newsletter. We hope to see and your families at St Vincent's Park for a fun family day out!

Hoping to see you then.

Take care and have a great Christmas and summer with your families

Best Wishes

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The Committee

President	Parool Shah
Vice President and Fundraising	Allison Webb
Treasurer	Karin Vosmansky
Secretary	Shusannah Morris
Website	Julia Toivonen
Support Programs	Anne-Marie Hammon
Membership Office and Newsletter	Wendy Taverna
Morning Tea / playgroup co-ordinators	Michelle Summerhill & Emma Eads

If you would like to contact any of the above members, please either email us at lifslittle_treasures@yahoo.com.au or call us on **0437 254 360**



“Supporting families of premature babies”

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**Founding member of the
National Premmie Foundation**

Our Vision and Aims

Who are we?

We are a group of parents who have experienced the roller coaster ride of NICU and Special Care Nurseries, who would like to provide you with support and friendship.

We are a founding member of the National Premmie Foundation.

Vision Statement

To improve the quality of life for NICU and Special Care babies and their parents by providing support, encouragement and friendship from parents who have been through the process and understand what it is like.

Aims:

- To introduce programs, which provide practical and emotional support to families who have babies that have spent time in intensive/special care nurseries.
- To provide easily accessible and relevant information for families
- To offer continued assistance to families to ease the transition from hospital to the home environment
- To increase community awareness of the unique issues faced by families of these special babies.

Supportive Parent Network

If you would like to talk to someone on a confidential basis about any of your concerns or just want a chat, you can contact us on

0437 254 360 or email us at **ifeslittle_treasures@yahoo.com.au**

We will forward your details to the parent with the most similar experience.

Mother: Anne- Marie
Baby: Hannah
Born: 24wks 5 days
Details: Weighing 675gms, haemorrhaging and infection behind placenta
Suburb: Ascot Vale

Mother: Allison
Baby: Twins
Born: 26 weeks
Details: 955grms & 915grms, home oxygen, chronic lung disease, mild cerebral palsy and glasses.
Suburb: Sunbury

Mother: Parool
Baby: Luke
Born: 27wks
Details: 915gms, apnoea and bradycardia, delay in gross motor development
Suburb: Armadale

Mother: Emma
Baby: Lily & Charlotte
Born: Twins born at 24wks 5days
Details: 685grams & 667grams. Chronic lung, A's & B's
Suburb: Hoppers Crossing

Mother: Wendy
Baby: Sophie Louise
Born: 24wks
Details: 585gms
Spontaneous labor due to bicornuate uterus. PDA, feeding issues, long term expressing.
Suburb: Macedon

Mother: Janelle
Baby: Twins
Born: 24.5 wks
Details: Loss of twin next day, general issues of a very premature baby, chronic lung, ROP, PDA, A& B's
Suburb: Seabrook

Mother: Julia
Baby: Ronan
Born: 27wks 3 days
Details: 1140gms, born due to PPRM & Spontaneous Labor. Chronic Lung Disease, PDA, Hernia, Jaundice. On oxygen for 3 months, came home off all oxygen. Spent 110 days in hospital.
Suburb: Wantirna

Mother: Karin
Baby: Robbie
Born: 32wks
Details: emergency c-section weighing 1334g due to severe pre-eclampsia and HELLP syndrome suffered IUGR and sepsis infection. Gross motor issues requiring physiotherapy.
Suburb: Croydon

Mother: Shusannah
Baby: Molly-Rose
Born: 25 weeks
Details: IVF with complications, hospitalised for term of pregnancy, severe haemorrhaging. Chronic lung, respiratory & feeding issues, Stage 4 ROP & complications. Home on oxygen
Suburb: Malvern

Mother: Michelle
Baby: Hayley
Born: 24wks 2 days
Details: 658 gms
Cervical Incompetence, went into hospital at 22 weeks, stayed in bed until delivery. Chronic Lung Disease. Came home on oxygen and apnoea monitor.
Suburb: Gowanbrae

Mother: Genieve
Baby: Lucy & Charlie Brown
Born: 31wks
Details: 680 & 1610gms. Admitted to hospital at 29 weeks, severe hemorrhaging, pre eclampsia. Gave birth by emergency c-section. pneumothorax and tongue-tie, A&B's, blood transfusion, ngt feeding. Developmental delay in speech and processing skills.
Suburb: Wangaratta





Ask the Doctor

Professor Colin Morley, Neonatal Medicine, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne

“Is there a delay in prem babies getting teeth and what are the common problems with a prem baby's teeth?”

There is very little good data about this. My experience is that the time teeth appear is very variable in both preterm and term infants. What data there is does not show any difference in the time of eruption of both milk teeth and permanent teeth in prem babies compared with term infants when corrected for prematurity.

How long should you adjust for corrected age and is it different for babies born at different gestations?

At least up to two years. After that it becomes a smaller fraction of their lives.

Apart from the scheduled immunisations, are there any other vaccines that they recommend prems to have?

Chicken pox and Rotavirus are new vaccines that are good for all babies. There are no special vaccines that will benefit prems.

Is it common to have a natural birth when having a premature baby?

Yes it is quite common to have a vaginal delivery with a very premature baby although it is not as common with term babies. It varies a little with gestational age but about 40% are normal vaginal deliveries, 7% breech vaginal, a third caesarean section after labour started and 20% as a caesarean section without labour.

At approximately what age does a child with Chronic Lung disease develop 'normal' lungs?

There is no easy answer to this. It depends on the severity of the neonatal chronic lung disease. About 40% of infants born at less than 29 weeks' will need oxygen when they reach the equivalent of 36 week's gestation (the definition of chronic lung disease or bronchopulmonary dysplasia). The majority will not need oxygen treatment by the time they go home. A very small percentage will need oxygen treatment for months after they reach term. Most of these children will appear to breathe normally and have normal lung function by the time they are 2 years post term. However, if they have very sophisticated and sensitive lung tests their lungs are subtly different from term infants. This persists well into the teenage years even though these children consider their lungs to be normal.

When starting solids is it best to go by real or corrected age?


The standard advice is to go by corrected age. However, there is not much science behind it and many mothers of prems start their babies on tasters when they are about 4 months post term without obviously causing harm and to the delight of the babies and their mums.

As a parent of a bub in NICU, you feel very hapless sitting there day after day watching everyone else e.g. nurses & doctors helping your child, what can a parent do that can assist their child to develop, i.e. sing to them, read stories to them.

Those of us who care for these tiny babies are very aware of the mother's sense of helplessness and frustration at not being a "normal mum". There is good evidence that these infants recognize their mother's voice and smell and are calmed by their mother. When possible it is good for the mother to be near her baby and help or do all these things she can to help care for the baby. Even these little babies like to hear their mother's voice.

Is it true this enhances their mental awareness state or does the noise level in the incubator or constant stimulation aggravate the baby?

There is increasing evidence that the mother's presence soothes the baby. She becomes very aware of what helps her baby. Whether this results in long-term benefits we don't know but there is no evidence that it does any harm. Certainly inappropriate stimulation is bad for the baby.

 **If there is a question you would like answered, please drop us a line at: lifeslittletreasures@yahoo.com or write to us at LLT PO Box 476, Chadstone Centre RP, Vic, 3148.**

www.lifeshlittletreasures.org.au

LLT has a new logo and Julia Toivonen (one of the mums on the committee) has spent endless hours in redesigning our state of the art website! We hope you like this new look and find it informative and user friendly.

This website is work in progress so keep a look out for new additions! We would love any feedback or suggestions that you might have to make it even better!

We now have a gallery section showing how our little ones have grown.

If you would like to include your child in our gallery section please drop us an email at [lifeshlittletreasures @yahoo.com](mailto:lifeshlittletreasures@yahoo.com) or call

If you are looking for online support visit:

www.lilaussieprems.com.au

L'il Aussie Prems

An Australian support site for parents & families of premature babies. You will find useful links to all things preemie including clothing stores, support sites, birth stories, forum, articles, journeys through the NICU & much more.

A free Community Forum and chatroom is found where you can talk to other parents who have been through the rollercoaster ride after giving birth to a premature baby / babies.

Welcome to our new members

Jenny Bradley
Tamara McKenzie
Daine Singer
Sonia Di Marco
Jansel Kulac
Bindi-Jane Hartford
Giannina Chaffey



Happy Birthday



Our birthday stars for the upcoming months are:

Christian Nation 4 yrs 1/11
Amelia Callea 3 yrs 11/11
James and Maxwell Lee 5yrs 24/11
Sophie Taverna 3yrs 5/12
Angus Watkins 4 yrs 14/12
Kaan Kulac 1 yr 28/12
Robbie Vosmansky 1yr 6/1
Lachlan and Lucy Hudson 1 yr 24/1
Hannah Hammon 5 yrs 30/1

If you would like to share your own story or write an article for our newsletter we would love to hear from you. Contributions will be acknowledged with a small gift.

MASSAGE BABY WITH LOVE

AROMABABY

This article follows on from
'Baby Massage' found in our
May 2007 Newsletter

During recent years, massage has become increasing popular as a gentle and nurturing therapy which helps to improve bonding between parents and their new babies.

But there are many other benefits of baby massage for all to enjoy! These include improving Baby's sleeping and relaxation, aiding digestion, increasing muscle tone and strength, and massage has even been proven to increase weight gain in premature babies.

Which oil do I use?

With studies now showing the benefits of massage are many, using pure, organic products for your baby seems only natural.

Pure, cold pressed, organic oils contain their own unique, beneficial properties and are a great way to nourish the skin. Oils also enable massage to be carried out using rhythmic, fluid movements over Baby's body. An added bonus is that oil can help to combat dryness, commonly experienced by new babies, by moisturising the skin.

Cold pressed, certified organic jojoba oil, sunflower or sweet almond are the preferred choice of various baby massage groups in Australia (International Association of Infant Massage - IAIM as well as IMA - Infant Massage Australia). Grapeseed oil is often solvent extracted and could be contaminated with chemical residues and other oils such as peanut are prone to causing allergies.

Whilst natural, pure essential oils may be too strong for newborn skin so aroma-free/no fragrance what so ever is ideal for young babies.

Blending your organic base oil with small amounts of other high quality oils offers additional benefits.

*'massage time is great for
telling short stories and
reciting nursery rhymes'*

Try a pre-blended massage oil formulated specifically for babies from the range at www.aromababy.com to eliminate the guess work. Or add to an organic jojoba or almond base oil 5ml of organic evening primrose oil which offers care for dry and eczema-prone conditions, calendula, an infused oil made by steeping the calendula flowers in a cold pressed base oil, which is excellent for damaged or inflamed skin and/or natural vitamin e oil which is well known for its ability to heal the skin.

ALLERGIES

Because some babies may be allergic to certain oils, it is wise to carry out a patch test before using any oil all over Baby's body. In particular, peanut oil tends to be one of the oils with a high incidence of allergic reaction in babies and children. As such, and taking into consideration the number of other high quality vegetable oils available, this is not an oil I would recommend for baby massage. If in doubt, it is always wise to carry out a small patch test prior to using any product, particularly when there is a family history of allergic reaction.

To help Baby gain the most from massage, use firm, long and flowing strokes where possible. Use the whole hand (palm) where you can and don't forget the soles of Baby's feet, hands and the scalp area.

For older babies, massage time is great for telling short stories and reciting nursery rhymes.

Take a few deep breaths to relax yourself. Speak softly to your baby, letting them know that they are about to be massaged. Be sure to ask 'permission' before you both commence and away you go ... Your child will soon learn that their 'massage' time is an extremely special time for you both to share!

For massage tips and easy to follow step by step guide, visit www.aromababy.com and click on Baby Massage.

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Morning Teas/ Playgroups



Morning Tea at RWH

Morning teas are now held on Friday's in conjunction with the social workers morning tea. Our next one where a support programme member of life little treasures will be a speaker will be at 10.30am on Friday the 2nd of November. The final one for the year will be combined with the Christmas tree decorating at 10.30am on Friday the 7th of December.



Morning Tea at Monash

We held our first morning tea at Ronald McDonald House on the 8th of October. Dates of future morning teas for parents past and present who have had a bub at Monash will be confirmed shortly.



Community Morning Teas / Playgroup

Stonnington

Time: **10.00am – 11.30am**

Venue: Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House, 22 Rob Roy Road, East Malvern, 3145 (melways 69 D2)

Dates: **9th Nov**. Please note that there will be no morning teas in December and January.

The first for 2008 will be 8th Feb, to be confirmed closer to the date.

There will be \$5 attendance fee per family to cover cost of room, toys and morning tea refreshments

Gowanbrae* (near Airport West)

Time: **11.30 – 1.00pm**

Venue: Gowanbrae Community Centre, Gowanbrae Drive, Gowanbrae.

Dates: **Nov 23rd, Dec 21st, Jan 18th and Feb 15th**

** Please note as this is a playgroup, those attending will need to be members of Playgroup Victoria. Forms are available on the day if you are not a member already. Families with health care cards will be eligible for the concession rate.*

Ronan's Story

At 12.50am on the 17th of March, 2006, my husband Mark and I welcomed our very premature son, Ronan into the world at just 27 weeks gestation. This was a day of joy, excitement & celebration but also great concern about the road ahead.

My whole pregnancy was trouble free until I reached 26 weeks, when I was diagnosed with a condition called Carpal Tunnel. This did not affect my pregnancy but I had to live with this uncomfortable condition and continue on in my pregnancy very swollen from fluid retention.

I was counting down the days until June, when our son was to be born. With 88 days to go, our son had other ideas. After finishing work for the day in my job as an Admin Assistant, I felt some uncomfortable pain which I put down to Braxton Hicks (false labour). After a few hours the pain was getting worse, Mark and I decided to contact the hospital for advice. As I was looking for the hospital's phone number I felt a gush, and after running to the toilet I found blood. For a moment, time stood still. In my mind I tried to prepare myself for the possible outcome and told myself there was nothing I could do, and this was life - be strong.

A few short hours after arriving at the hospital Ronan was born naturally without drugs weighing 1.14kg (1140g). He was born due to PPRM (Pre-term Premature Rupture Of Membranes) & Premature Labour which was too late to stop. He was taken to the NICU at Monash Medical Centre Clayton which was to be his home for the coming months. To see our son so tiny and breathing with machines was an amazing yet terrifying experience. We were allowed to touch him through the humid crib and as time progressed we were able to hold him. Each passing day was different. On the days that he was making progress we skipped with joy but on the odd days he was going backwards was very hard and disappointing. No matter how much disappointment we felt we were so blessed to know our son was still with us because we were ready for the worst and not expecting any miracles but he always pulled through and surprised us.



Only two weeks after giving birth I went back to work part-time. I was working 5 hours each day because I needed to express but also rest as we had a baby to look after. My husband and I would both go to work and see Ronan each night. It became such a routine that by the time Ronan came home we didn't know what to do with all the extra time we had available. The nights were long and felt lonely at times as we knew we should have had our baby at home with us but we also knew that he was in the best place possible to thrive and become strong enough to come home.

Ronan had many complications but this did not deter our positive thoughts, no matter how much of a "rollercoaster" ride our journey was. He was on oxygen for 3 months as he had Chronic Lung Disease, a PDA (Patent Ductus Arteriosus) in which he was given medication to close the valve. It took 6 weeks from birth for the valve to close. His last main hurdle was a Hernia which was operated on one week before we came home. We certainly had many "ups & downs" like any prem journey but we never shed a tear. I felt in my heart that if I cried I was not being strong for Ronan, which of course I knew was not true but it was my way of dealing with the situation we were thrown into.

Many premie parents are so overwhelmed by the whole experience that they find it hard to understand so feelings of guilt, frustration, & why us? Questions start being asked. I started blaming myself for the premature birth and was going out of my mind thinking about what I had done wrong.

Had I eaten something I shouldn't have? Did moving a piece of furniture a week before cause this to happen? Did doing the gardening a few weeks prior cause stress on the pregnancy? It took me a while to understand that it was just "one of these things" as I was advised by medical professionals and nothing could stop it from happening.

Our family & friends were extremely supportive with our journey. My family who are all living in Sydney rang each day to see how Ronan's progress was going and Marks family cooked us many meals and they encouraged us when we felt a little down. When we were given cards & presents and phone calls congratulating us on the birth of our son, it helped us believe that life no matter how fragile should be celebrated.

Throughout the journey my main priority was bonding with my son but also provide the best ingredient possible for him and that was my milk. I was expressing every 4 hours and freezing milk to take it to him each day. In the beginning it was stress free as he required little milk but as he was getting older and the daily intake was becoming more it was quite draining not only physically but emotionally. Because I was physically unable to breastfeed it made it very hard to bond with Ronan. Kangaroo Care helped the bonding between us as Ronan lay naked on my bare chest 'skin to skin' but breastfeeding was just that step closer to feeling complete. It wasn't until Ronan reached "36wks gestation" that we started teaching him to breastfeed. My milk supply was dwindling by this time as I had been expressing for 9 weeks but the moment I had been longing for had arrived and my supply was slowly boosting back up.

It took three weeks to teach Ronan to completely breastfeed. There were many high and low moments but we kept battling through it. He finally had the gavage tube removed NEVER to be placed in his nose again; this was a moment of glory for us. Ronan was successfully breastfeeding and also bottle feeding - a time I never thought would come. Sadly when Ronan came home he refused the breast & no matter what advice we were given and the many tricks we tried he was unable to continue.

This did not deter me and I continued to express and did so for 6 months.

After 110 days in hospital Ronan was due to come home. We were excited but VERY nervous about what lay ahead. I was worried about giving him his medications each day, how I was going to feed him, how would I know when he wanted a feed, what happens if he doesn't latch onto the breast, how much spare milk have I expressed, is his bed ready, has his sensor monitor been set up, what do we do as soon as we walk in the door with our new son? We had a million questions going through our minds because we had been around nurses for the past 3.5 months watching what we do and helping us when we weren't sure what to do, but it was also the most thrilling time for us because we FINALLY had our beautiful son home with us.

Today, 17 months on we are continuously attending physio to help Ronan with his milestones. He has been delayed with his motor skills, especially sitting but he has recently started standing and walking along the furniture. It is a reward to see him reach each milestone but it can also be disheartening when we are doing all that we can and he is still behind. We are very proud parents and every milestone he achieves, no matter how slow is celebrated with a huge cheer.

Julia Toivonen
Wantirna



*Ronan born at 27 weeks weighing 1140gms.
Chronic lung disease (on oxygen for 3 months),
PDA, Jaundice, and a hernia operation.
Spent 110 days in hospital
and came home off oxygen.*

What is it about premmie babies and advice? As soon as family / friends / crazy lady at Coles find out Malachy is a prem, the advice spews quicker than a Tequila Slammer hangover...

Yes I know that.... he will be behind in his milestones. I fully expect to be dressing him when he's 18, due to his inability to work zips and buttons. I have the psychiatrist all lined up to deal with the inevitable issues once he gets a girlfriend.

Yes I know that.... he is small. But rumour has it that babies grow so I'm hoping he will one day be bigger than an oompa loompa. If not, there are always stage productions of *The Wizard of Oz* or *Willy Wonka*. Or the circus.

Yes I know that.... he is funny looking. I liken him to an undercooked German sausage. Now b*ugger off.

Yes I know that.... him being born early is all my fault. Let me make it easy for you. I smoked. I drank. I took all sorts of illicit drugs. But I really think it was the squeezing toothpaste from the middle of the tube that cinched the deal. And yes, I am joking. Well about the smoking, drinking and drug taking anyway.

Yes I know that.... it's a shame he came early. Funny thing though. We got into this parenting thingo to come out with live children. So far, we're two for two. I'd rather him early than not at all.

Yes I know that.... you mean well. But really, be happy for us. Be supportive of us. And love our son the way we love him. Well, we don't need your love, Crazy Coles Lady. We just need you to respect personal space boundaries.

We could care less how he came out, or what the future holds for him. What we do know is that we have been given a beautiful gift that, each morning, we are thankful for.

Even if that gift is a small, undercooked German sausage who won't be able to use cutlery when he's older. And will probably squeeze toothpaste from the middle of the tube.

Sausage rolls

Thank you to Michelle for this recipe

- 500gms sausage meat
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of crushed garlic
- 1 carrot finely chopped or grated
- 1 Red capsicum finely chopped (optional)
- I tend to put the onion, carrot and cap. into a food processor so that it is really fine.

- Mix all ingredients together
- 1 pkt (3 sheets) of Puff Pastry
- Cut each sheet into half.
- Put sausage mixture into the middle and fold over
- Cut into desired qty.
- Put s/rolls onto baking paper and then on a baking tray
- Bake in a moderate oven for approx 30-40 min.



Cooks Corner

What can grandparents/family/friends do to help?

The birth of a sick baby is an emotional time for everyone. As a grandparent you probably joyfully anticipated the birth of a healthy baby. It is natural to want to take your child's fears, pain and anxiety away, but that is not what s/he needs right now. The parent(s) of the new baby need to be supported. They are going through a life crisis. Things to do that are helpful include:

- Offer a hug, a tear, or other signs of love and concern.
- Offer to be the family communicator. Find out exactly whom to notify and what the baby's parent(s) want others to know. Communicate that information--no more.
- Try to alleviate guilt. It is natural for a mother of a sick baby to feel guilty or responsible for the condition and problems of the baby. With rare exceptions, there was nothing the mother did to cause the baby to have problems. She needs to hear this over and over again. Sometimes having her talk to her obstetrician is reassuring.
- If there are other children and they know you well, offer to care for them; spend extra time interacting with them, help them to feel as important as the baby.
- Help with household chores: going on errands, getting groceries, cooking, picking up the house, caring for pets, providing transportation for their other children or for the parents. When others call or offer to help, let them know exactly what they too can do to help; don't turn them down.
- Acknowledge the baby's birth like your would if the baby had had problems, such as send flowers to the mother, buy something for the baby, take pictures. Gift suggestions: film for the camera; baby book, diary or calendar to record important events.
- Become involved with the new baby only to the extent that the parent(s) desire. Let the parents have time alone with the baby. If they wish you to be present in discussions they have with doctors and nurses, be a good listener, write down important points, suggest questions to the parents if they do not ask them; ask questions yourself if the parents do not. You are likely to remember more than they, so review the session with them later to help fill in important information. If they don't invite you to become involved, accept their need for privacy.
- Be empathetic regarding their concern for their child. Let them know how worried you were when your children became sick.
- Help the parents keep their focus in the right place, on the baby. Decrease additional stresses in their lives. This means putting aside any personal problems, such as disagreements, conflicts with other grandparents or children, or feelings of being "left out". This, too, may mean excusing them from family duties such as reunions, birthday parties, or gatherings.
- Find something about the baby to complement at each visit, be it hair colour, eyes, willingness to fight, cute feet, long fingers, a loving staff of nurses, etc.
- Praise your son/daughter/friend for his/her strength and fortitude through this stress; it provides encouragement.
- Help your son/daughter/friend keep up with his/her health. They tend to focus only on the baby, sometimes risking their own health and well-being.
- Suggest talking to a professional or seeking out medical help if the pressures grow too great.
- When setbacks occur, go back over all the successes the baby has had to date; help them to acknowledge the battles the baby has already won. Even when setbacks seem minor, do not minimize how difficult they are for parents.
- Offer to stay with them during NICU visits. Often a parent is alone. It can be a lonely time and just being there may help. If this is refused, though, don't see it as a sign of exclusion; respect the space that your child or friend needs.
- Be there for them when they need you. This might be during surgery or a sad moment, when dinners are needed, when they need a hand with the camera or merely a funny card. It may seem like your son/daughter/friend calls only in times of dire need, but that is when they need your help the most.

- Keep in touch often, even if it's only leaving a message on an answering machine telling them you care. Often evenings are a good time to see how the baby's day went. Keep the conversation going only as long as your son/daughter/friend wishes. Remember, they are physically and emotionally exhausted and may just need to know you are thinking of them and their baby. Keep questions general, such as "how was the baby's day today?". Try not to ask if everything is "all right"; there is always something that is not right -- often it's just the mere fact that the baby is still hospitalized. They will provide information when they are ready to share it. Often, parents will only tell you that it's been a bad day. Respect the fact that they do not wish to rehash the painful event again.
- Telling parents that this is a good time to catch up ahead of time for all those sleepless nights when the baby comes home. It is difficult for parents to sleep with all the worry, stress, being apart from their baby, and often pumping breastmilk every few hours.
- Questioning the skill of the nurses or doctors and/or the completeness of the information they provide. The parents need to form a bond of trust with their medical team; this undermines that trust.
- Pitying the baby. ("I just can't bear to see him this way", "he's in so much pain", etc.) It makes the parents feel even more helpless and guilty.
- Ascribing the mother's reaction to "hormones". While hormones are indeed out of kilter now, they are not the primary reason that the baby's mother is upset. The parents, and their baby, probably are facing the biggest challenge in their lives. They are afraid; the situation is completely new and unfamiliar.
- Asking when the baby will come home. Parents do not usually know until shortly before the day comes and there are often unforeseen setbacks that interfere with homecoming. Remember, parents keep this question in their minds always.

What shouldn't I do as a grandparent, family, or friend?

Things which may NOT helpful include:

- Creating guilt by suggesting that the mother contributed to her baby's problems; for example saying, "You shouldn't have ___ while you were pregnant" (smoked, worked, gone swimming, etc.) or, "If only you ___".
- Trying to take over decision making for the baby's parents. It is their baby and they need to be the ones making the decisions. Provide your opinions only if asked.
- Frequently verbalizing your concerns about the baby's outcome, whether s/he will live or die, or focusing on the possibility of future problems or disabilities. Usually babies do much better than grandparents or friends anticipate.
- Saying, "You can always have another baby" if the baby is very sick or dying. It does not make the situation any better or easier to handle. Instead, it implies rejection of the baby and lack of sympathetic understanding. Also, no one knows for sure if they can have another baby.
- Comparing your son/daughter's circumstance or baby to that of someone else.

www.meriter.com/living/preemie/other/grandparents.htm

Jokes and Riddles

Knock knock!

Who's there?

Bacon!

Bacon who?

Bacon a cake for your birthday

Knock knock!

Who's there?

Lettuce

Lettuce who?

Lettuce in!

Knock knock!

Who's there?

B 4

B 4 who?

B 4 I freeze to death can you please open the door

<http://kids.novita.org.au>

Our Beautiful Children



Kids and Babies

We are looking for Premature Babies and Children to be photographed by one of Australia's top portrait photographers to feature in a coffee table book entitled.....

Lifes Little Treasures

The book will be a collection of photographs and poems. For a \$49 registration fee, you can participate in this exciting project. The book will be available for purchase.

Register online at
www.lifesslittletreasures.org.au

Your \$49 registration fee will go directly to Lifes Little Treasures



Lifes Little Treasures is excited to offer you the opportunity for your child/children to be photographed by one of Australia's top photographers.

We are currently looking for Premature Babies and Children between birth and 12 years to be photographed to feature in a coffee table book entitled 'Lifes Little Treasures'.

The book will be a collection of photographs and individual poems about each child. For a \$49 registration fee, your baby or child can participate in this exciting project.

The \$49 registration fee goes directly to Lifes Little Treasures and you get a professional photo shoot of your baby/child with Gregory's photography in Victoria. The book and individual photos will be available for purchase once finished.

This offer is not limited to Lifes Little Treasures members. If you have family or friends that have had a premature baby/child and they would like to be involved, just simply head to our website: www.lifesslittletreasures.org.au and fill out the registration form.

**Lifes Little Treasure Inc.
Membership Application / Renewal
ABN 94 232 874 269**

Family Name _____

First Name/s _____

Address _____

_____ **Post Code** _____

Email Address _____

Phone No. _____

Mobile No. _____

Your Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Birth Weight: _____

Gestation when born (i.e. 27 weeks)

(We will be using birth dates for our birthday corner; do you want your child's birthday included in the newsletter? Yes)

In order to maximise our community awareness programmes, we would love to find out where you heard about us.

Where did you hear about us?

**Changed your address
or contact details?**

Yes

If you have changed you address or contact details, please notify us by completing and forwarding the above membership form.



Please cut along here



METHODS OF PAYMENT
(\$10 annual Fee)

i) Please send cheque payable to:

'Lifes Little Treasures Inc'
To the address below.

Lifes Little Treasures Inc.
PO Box 476, Chadstone Centre RP
VIC 3148

ii) Or Pay on-line:

Bank: Westpac

Account Name: Lifes Little Treasures
Inc

BSB 033-371

Acc No: 18-8269

Please ensure you include your
name as reference on the Internet
banking payment.

I have paid on-line:

YES (circle if yes)

Lifes Little Treasures is a non-profit
incorporated association. We are a
voluntary parent organisation that
relies on its members to help us to
continue supporting other families.

Your membership contributes to
assisting us to achieve our goals.

We are always looking for volunteers
to assist us with our cause. If you
would like to actively assist Lifes
Little Treasures in any way please do
not hesitate to contact us.



Please cut along here



*If you want to know the value of a SECOND,
Ask and Olympic sprinter who has missed the GOLD.*

*If you want to know the value of a SECOND,
Ask the person who has missed an ACCIDENT.*

*If you want to know the value of a MINUTE,
Ask a person who has missed the TRAIN.*

*If you want to know the value of a HOUR,
Ask two lovers waiting to MEET each other.*

*If you want to know the value of a DAY,
Ask the editor of a NEWSPAPER.*

*If you want to know the value of a WEEK,
Ask the editor of a WEEKLY.*

*If you want to know the value of a MONTH,
Ask a mother who had delivered a PRETERM BABY.*

Author unknown

For Premature Babies and their Parents

The Parent-Infant Clinic in Heidelberg, Victoria provides the following services for parents and their babies who have been born prematurely

- **Beautiful Beginnings Therapeutic/Early Intervention Playgroups**
- **Beautiful Beginnings Parent Workshops**
- **Premiepress**
- **Individual counselling**

Location: Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital,
Level 1, Centaur Building,
Banksia Street, Heidelberg Heights, Vic 3081

Contact the Parent-Infant Clinic on Tel: (03) 9496 4496 / Fax:
(03) 9496 4148 Or

Email: carol.newnham@austin.org.au
or elizabeth.barbante@austin.org.au

**Lifes Little Treasures & The Royal Women's Hospital 9th Floor
Christmas Morning Tea**

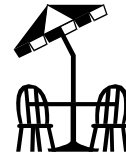
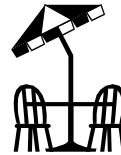
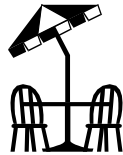


**Friday 7th of December
Time: 10.30am**



Come and join us for a mince pie and a cuppa
as we decorate the 9th Floor Christmas tree.

We look forward to seeing you.



Parents of Premature

Babies/Children, Family & Friends

Are invited to

Life's Little Treasures Annual

'PREMS IN THE PARK PICNIC'

A great opportunity to meet new families

Sunday 2nd December 2007, 11:30am

**St Vincent's Gardens, Albert Park,
Melway Ref pg57 3F**

**Near playground - Look for Purple balloons
(Junction of St Vincent's Place North South & St Vincent's Street)**

BYO Food, Drink & Rug

(no BBQ facilities available)

**For more details please contact
lifslittle_treasures@yahoo.com.au**

or

Ph: 0437 254 360



Moment by Moment™
a journey of a premature baby

Premature Baby Clothing
Cuski Baby Comforter
My Tiny Hands Signs
Earlybirds Range
Twins, Multiple & Sibling gifts
Angel Baby Clothing
Baby Keepsakes
Hand & Feet Inking kits
Dr Browns Preemie Bottles



Wholesale enquiries welcome
for Cuski and My Tiny Hands

Support ~ Information ~ Friendship ~ Understanding
www.momentbymoment.com.au
or call Fiona on 040 868 9330

Nominate Lifes Little Treasures whilst going through checkout and 5% of your sale will be donated to us on your behalf

Born from experience Moment by Moment is 100% dedicated to premature babies. We offer all you need for your journey. Gifts for premature babies, twins, triplets & siblings. Angel Baby/Baby Loss families are also cared for at Moment by Moment with Clothing & Keepsakes. Every item is wrapped with love and chosen with a premature baby or Angel baby in mind

You will find true stories on premature birth, Pre Eclampsia and HELLP Syndrome info, links with support services and charities that help those who have premature babies. Don't forget to sign up for our Journeys club so you hear about all the exciting new products we are receiving daily along with events and of course our sales.

Keep an eye out for more very special surprises on Moment by Moment soon just for prems!

And Remember - Purchase something that fits, I guarantee they will cherish it forever.

www.momentbymoment.com.au

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On behalf of the Management Committee and members of Lifes Little Treasures, we would like to thank our other following sponsors for their generosity and support.



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