



Tips for friends and family

What you can do as a friend or relative of someone who has just experienced the birth of a premature or sick newborn, you might be unsure about how to act. Here are a few suggestions:

Do:

- **Congratulate** the parents on the birth of their baby. Offer to post a birth announcement.
- **Acknowledge** the stress and toll Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) / Special Care Nursery (SCN) life can take.
- **Offer positive comments.**
- **Offer to baby sit** siblings / Offer to pass on information to other family members.
- **Cook meals for the family** and help out with housework.
- **Drive parents to the hospital.** Parking can often be hard to find and / or expensive.
- **Offer to keep parents company** while they visit baby, or meet them for a meal.

Don't:

- **Avoid comparing.** This may only serve to maximize a parent's grief.
- **Do not intrude / pry** and avoid giving parenting advice.
- **Avoid abandoning parents.** Stay in touch, knowing you are thinking of them helps.
- **Avoid talking about setbacks** that may happen or challenges that baby may face.
- **Do not expect the parents to attend family gatherings.**
- **Do not visit when sick.**

Don't Say to a Parent:

"Didn't you know something was wrong"?

"At least you get a full night's sleep while the baby is in hospital"

"At least you didn't get really big and uncomfortable"

"He / she must be in so much pain / will they be normal when they get bigger"?

"When can I hold the baby"?

"It must be hard to watch someone else take care of your baby"

"How do you leave him/her there every night"?

You cannot make their baby better or take away their pain.

All you can do is be supportive and understanding.

> More detailed information can be found at: lifeslittletreasures.org.au