



The Paediatric Society of New Zealand
Te Kāhui Mātai Arotamariki o Aotearoa



Newborn Clinical Network Endorsement Paper: Family Integrated Care (FICare)

“Supporting whānau to become integrated into the neonatal care team”

Care partners

Whanāu Haumaru Kotahi / Family Integrated Care (FICare) supports whānau to develop confidence, knowledge, and skills in providing care for their pēpi. The vision of this model of care is to support the full integration of whānau into the care of their pēpi in the Neonatal facility. This will be through engagement, involvement, and education in a collaborative and supportive environment. It recognises that each family is unique, that they are the constant in the infant’s life and are the experts on their infant’s abilities and needs. This model of care must demonstrate practical application of the principles of Te Tiriti to enable Māori to express their mana, to ensure they receive equitable, culturally safe high-quality care to achieve equitable health outcomes for māmā and pēpi.

The network believes that involvement of parents is of paramount importance and integrating family integrated care as a core standard for neonatal care is essential, in particular for the most vulnerable infants, such as premature, sick, low birthweight and surgical infants (European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants, 2021; Global Alliance for Newborn Health, 2021). There is a strong consensus of the critical importance of keeping māmā/primary caregiver and pēpi together where they meet the clinical criteria for admission to Transitional Care (Te Whatu Ora, New Zealand Child, and Youth Clinical Networks 2024).

Neonatal units worldwide have adopted the principles of infant and family integrated developmental care, including:

- Skin to skin (Petty and van den Hoogen, 2022)
- Parental participation and involvement in care
- Unrestricted parental access

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Research shows that if the parents feel empowered to care for their baby, maternal and paternal stress and anxiety can be reduced, and hospital stays may decrease (Waddington et al, 2021; Kupahu-Marion Kahoano et al, 2022).

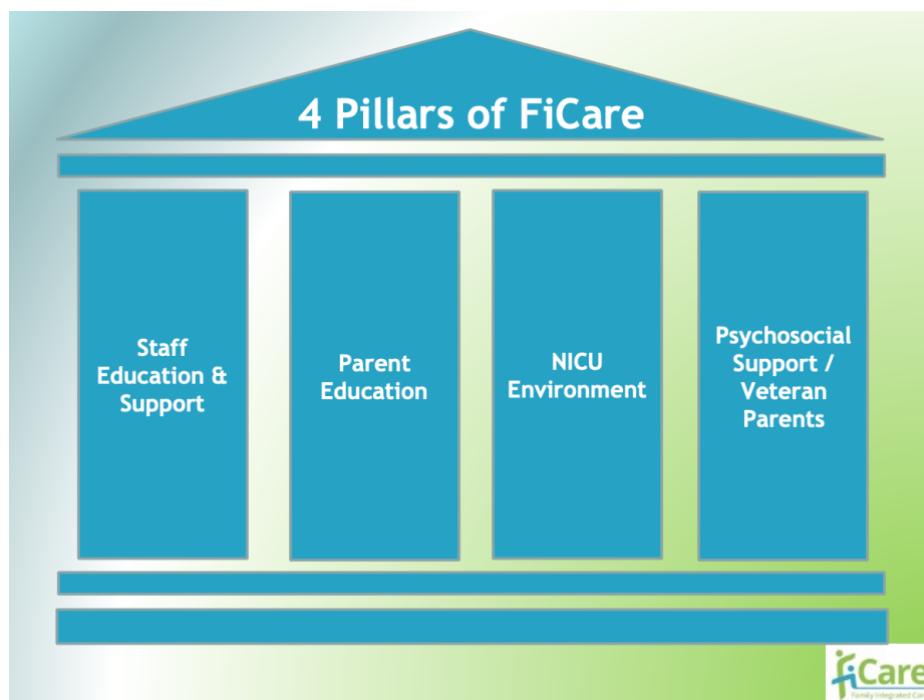
The cornerstones of this care are:

- Dignity and respect
- Information sharing
- Participation
- Collaboration
- Access
- Care co-ordination

The network recommends:

- Every baby born prematurely, small and /or sick, along with their parents / primary caregivers, should be provided with high-quality neonatal care that includes the holistic application of family inclusion and family-integrated care practices
- Neonatal services must know the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and demonstrate their understanding, integration, and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi throughout their day-to-day practice with Māori
- Parents should be valued as key caregivers of their babies at all times, including empowering the parenting role
- As attachment and bonding can only take place if the parents are consistently present, they must be given the opportunity to care for their baby. Early and ongoing parental presence, therefore, must be encouraged. Parents should be considered essential care providers, not visitors. Policies should reflect this wording
- Non-separation of māmā/primary caregiver and pēpi should be supported where clinically indicated within a Transitional care facility
- Ensure tailored education for staff and families on the principles of FiCare are available
- Siblings' needs are taken into consideration as part of the family dynamics and support

Whanāu Haumarū Kotahi (FiCare)



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