

# GOING HOME BAGS

## What is it?

This activity creates packages for parents to take with them as they leave the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Your group can get creative to celebrate this moment and help parents take home items that they need to make the transition a little easier.

## Why is important?

Going home from the hospital—and especially the NICU—can be a scary and uncertain time. These “Going Home” packages help families with the transition.

## “GOING HOME” PACKAGE IDEAS:

This is a list of ideas but check with your NICU/hospital contact to see what the site might already have and what is most needed for parents as they are leaving the NICU. Each site differs in programming and could have limitations on what can be donated. New items only.

- Baby first aid kits
- Forehead and ear thermometers
- Bag (opportunity for your group to design the bag)
- Onesie, clothing (various sizes), socks, hats, etc. Please purchase in packs of 3 or 6.
- Toys, teething rings
- Picture frames and keepsakes (for entire family)
- Bottles, pacifiers, bibs and other feeding and travel accessories
- Wipes, diapers and skincare products
- Personal care items for parents
- March of Dimes will include resources – added information about sharing story and staying connected

## SURPRISES & DELIGHT

If your volunteers are interested in adding a surprise to this activity or for the NICU/hospital partner, here are some ideas:

- Write a note of encouragement to the parents. These should be reviewed by the primary contact prior to ensure appropriate and sensitive language is used.
- Write “thank you” notes to the NICU staff for all their support of moms and babies.

# BOOK DRIVE

## What is it?

This activity is a book collection so parents can read to their babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and/or provide books for big brother and big sister to enjoy while visiting their sibling.

This is the time to grab your favorite childhood reads, or books that help to explain the NICU journey and pass along the story to parents and their children.

## Why is important?

Being in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is a scary and uncertain time. Providing families with opportunities to connect with their children through reading is a special gift.

NICU babies still love and respond hearing their parents' voices. This helps promote bonding if parents aren't able to hold their little one.

## BOOK & COLLECTION TIMING IDEAS:

Providing a book is such a special gift. Here are a few ideas for books your group can collect and natural times throughout the year to host a collection. If these don't work for your group, simply pick other times that work for you and the NICU/hospital partner. Books must be new and unused.

- Collect children's books in between or during your fundraising efforts.
  - Babies first board book
  - Books for siblings (consider a variety of reading and age levels)
  - Favorite childhood book
  - Newborn books (Oh, the Places You'll Go, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Rainbow Fish, Where the Wild Things Are, etc.)
- Here are couple ideas for timing:
  - March 2 - Dr. Seuss day – National Read Across America Day
  - November 1 – National Family Literacy Day



# SIBLING KITS

## What is it?

Volunteers put together activity kits for siblings so they have something fun to do while the rest of the family focuses on bonding with their new baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

## Why is important?

Big brother and/or big sister have been a part of this journey to the NICU. Parents want each child to feel cared for and special. These activity kits go a long way in helping with just that, and when siblings come to the hospital, they get their own little surprise!

## ACTIVITY KIT IDEAS:

Check with your NICU/hospital contact to see what they might already have and what is most needed for sibling activities. Each site differs and could restrict donations.

- Coloring books
- Crayons/Colored Pencils
- Activity books
- Age-appropriate books
- T-shirts (big brother/big sister)
- Toys
- Snacks – goldfish, graham crackers, etc.
- Water, juice

## SURPRISES & DELIGHT

If you or your volunteers are interested in adding a surprise to the kit or for the NICU/hospital partner, here are some ideas:

- Connect the activity to holidays, seasons, and/or special days (birthdays, etc.).
- Write a note of encouragement to the siblings. These should be reviewed by the primary contact prior to ensure to ensure appropriate and sensitive language is used.
- Write thank you notes to the NICU staff for all their support of moms and babies.
- Make/purchase gifts as keepsakes for families (birth stone jewelry, etc.).

# MEALS THAT MATTER

## What is it?

A fun and delicious way to make a huge impact on the wellbeing of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)/hospital partner staff and parents whose babies are in the NICU.

Meal donations must be restaurant catered meals or gift cards to a restaurant. No homemade meals.

## Why is important?

Knowing where your next meal is coming from should be the last thing parents in the NICU have to worry about. Providing a meal is simple, yet nourishing to the mind, body and soul. We all know how far a good meal and community support goes to make parents feel less alone on their journey.

## IDEAS FOR TIMING

Providing a meal is helpful at most times throughout the month or year and there are few extra days where your members can consider layering on a theme for the meal. This is also a great theme for donated sweet treats! Note: there are 35 beds in the SRHS NICU, so donors are encouraged to plan to provide for 70 individuals. An accurate number can be shared upon planning event.

- May: Mother's Day
- June: Father's Day
- September: NICU Nurses Week
- November: Thanksgiving
- December: Christmas

## SURPRISES & DELIGHT

If your volunteers are interested in adding a surprise to the meal or activity with the NICU/hospital partner, here are some ideas:

- Collect more restaurant gift cards and leave a gift for the NICU staff and nurses.
- Write notes of encouragement for the new parents to be and give with the meal donation or if in person use as centerpieces for the meal. These should be reviewed by the primary contact prior to ensure appropriate and sensitive language is used.
- Ask for an in-kind table décor donations (no flowers) to have on the tables.

# MONTHLY ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>JANUARY</b></p> <p><i>March for Babies Registration/Launch Birth Defects Awareness Month</i></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>FEBRUARY</b></p> <p><i>Valentine's Day – send Valentine-Grams to the NICU Valentine's Onesies</i></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>MARCH</b></p> <p><i>St. Patrick's Day Leprechaun Treats to NICU</i></p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>APRIL</b></p> <p><i>Easter Eggs to the NICU Easter Onesies to NICU Black Maternal Health Week Superhero Day/Week Volunteer Appreciation Week</i></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>MAY</b></p> <p><i>Mother's Day Flowers or Craft to NICU Nurses' Week Maternal Mental Health Month Pre-eclampsia Awareness Week</i></p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>JUNE</b></p> <p><i>Father's Day Footprint craft</i></p>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>JULY</b></p> <p><i>Independence Day</i></p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <p><i>National Breastfeeding Month</i></p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <p><i>NICU Awareness Month NICU Nurses Week</i></p>
<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <p><i>National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Day (10/15) and Month Halloween Costumes to NICU</i></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p><i>Prematurity Awareness Month World Prematurity Day Days of Gratitude Thanksgiving Meal to NICU National Family Literacy Day</i></p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>DECEMBER</b></p> <p><i>Holiday Season Christmas Cards to NICU and Staff Holiday Meal to NICU Christmas Craft</i></p>