

Special Care Baby Unit Little Library

Promoting Parental Bonding, Early Literacy and Family-Centered Care.

Sherifat Abimbola Ukachukwu. RN, RM, RPHN, BNSc, MSc (Student)
Portiuncula University Hospital.

Introduction

The Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) Little Library is an initiative to enhance the care provided to premature and sick newborns during their stay in the Special Care Baby Unit. This quality innovation is centered around fostering parental bonding, early literacy, and a family-centered care approach. Notably, empirical studies underscore the profound benefits of early reading and interactive engagement in nurturing the cognitive development of preterm and unwell infants.¹

SCBU Challenges

Parental Anxiety:

Parents of infants in the SCBU often experience heightened anxiety due to the unfamiliar environment and medical complexities.³

Early Literacy:

Premature infants are at risk of delayed language and cognitive development due to limited exposure to language-rich environments.⁴

Parental Bonding:

Separation and medical interventions can hinder the development of strong emotional bonds between parents and their infants.²

Family-Centered Care:

Balancing medical needs with involving families in the care process can be challenging in a SCBU setting.⁴

Aims

- Reduce parental anxiety and stress levels within the SCBU.
- Facilitate early literacy development in premature infants.
- Enhance the family-centered care approach by creating a supportive environment.
- Strengthen parental bonding and involvement in the care process.

Objectives

- Creating a Safe Space: Establish a safe corner within the SCBU for the Little Library.
- Diverse Book Collection: Curate a collection of age-appropriate, wipe-able, and durable books that cater to both premature infants and parents, fostering early literacy and connection.
- Supportive Resources: Provide information leaflet and the SCBU reading diary.

Change Idea

- Introduce the "Cuddle and Read" care, promoting skin-to-skin cuddling between parents and babies during shared reading sessions from the SCBU Little Library collection.

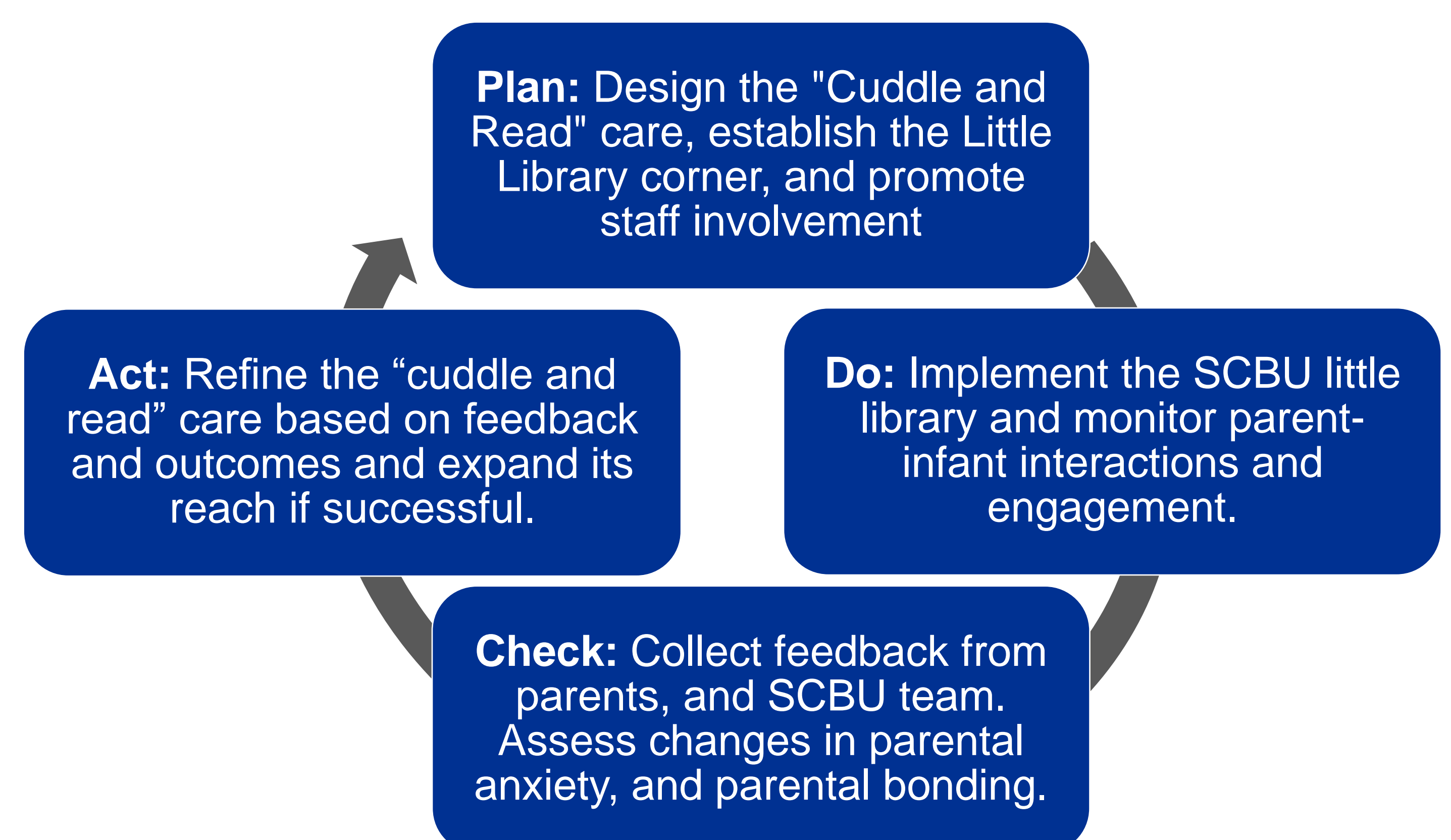
Acknowledgment

- This quality innovation at the Special Care Baby Unit of Portiuncula University Hospital, was funded by the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit, Health Service Executive West.

Methods

- Multidisciplinary Collaboration to curate an age-appropriate book collection.
- Design and set up the Little Library corner within the SCBU.
- PDCA Cycle: To ensure continuous improvement and relevance to the needs of patients and parents
- Parental Orientation: Introduce the SCBU little library to parents during the orientation session upon admission and highlight the importance of spending time engaging with their infants through reading and nurturing interactions.
- Monitoring and feedback.

Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)



Parental Feedback Results

- Increased Parental Engagement.
- Calming effect.
- Normalized practice of reading to babies



Conclusion

This initiative highlights the profound impact of early literacy and parental involvement on the well-being of premature infants. It also underscores the importance of creating a holistic care environment that considers emotional needs alongside medical interventions. By addressing parental anxiety, promoting early literacy, and strengthening parental bonding, we are fostering a nurturing environment that supports these vulnerable infants' medical and emotional needs.

References

- Erdei C, Klass P, Inder TE. Reading aloud with infants in the neonatal intensive care unit: a unit-based program to enhance language enrichment and support early foundational relationships. *American Journal of Perinatology*. 2021 Jun 7;40(03):255-9.
- Givrad, S., Hartzell, G. and Scala, M., 2021. Promoting infant mental health in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU): A review of nurturing factors and interventions for NICU infant-parent relationships. *Early Human Development*, 154, p.105281.
- Malouf R, Harrison S, Burton HA, Gale C, Stein A, Franck LS, Alderdice F. Prevalence of anxiety and post-traumatic stress (PTS) among the parents of babies admitted to neonatal units: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *EClinicalMedicine*. 2022 Jan 1;43.
- Smith AR, Hanson-Abromeit D, Heaton A, Salley B. A survey of neonatal nurses perspectives on voice use and auditory needs with premature infants in the NICU. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2021 Aug 11;18(16):8471.