SENSORY DEVELOPMENT CARE MAP

MADE WITH PATIENT & FAMILY INPUT

Sunnybrook
DAN WOMEN & BABIES PROGRAM

How to use the map

The activities have been divided into two categories, based on your baby's gestational week:

Protect: Reduce too much sensory input to protect healthy brain development

Promote: Provide appropriate sensory input to promote healthy brain development

The darkness of the coloured bars indicate how often the activity should be done according to the gestational week:

Darker = activity should/can be done more frequently

Lighter = activity should/can be performed less often

The activities are based on your baby's medical status and also your baby's ability to cope with the "sensory input". If any of the activities are felt to be too stressful for your baby, they can easily be modified.

Your care team will help guide you so you know when your baby is ready for these activities.

Our Sensory Development Care Logo shows the interaction of the five senses: touch, movement, taste and smell, hearing, and sight.

For example, when you gently talk to your baby during kangaroo care, more than one sense is activated. This has an impact on the development of multiple senses at the same time, which protects and promotes your baby's brain development.

Your baby: A week-by-week map

Your care team call this tool a "map" as it visually guides you through the development of your baby's senses. Senses like vision, touch and hearing allow your baby to experience and learn about their environment. Your voice, your smell and touch through kangaroo care all enter your baby's brain in powerful ways.

In the NICU, babies can sometimes get too much sensory input. This can come from lights and sounds, as well as from interactions with different members of the care team.

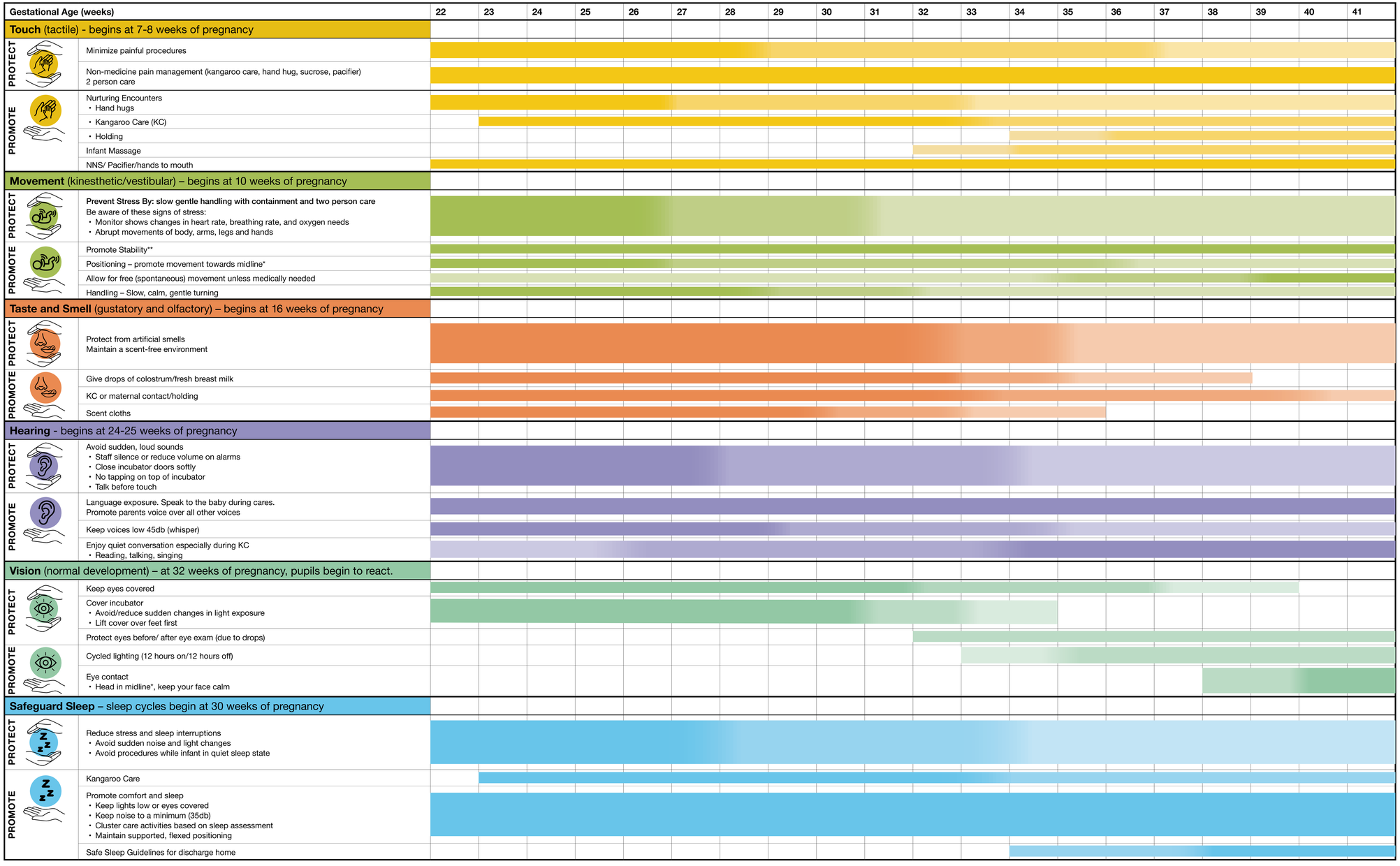
You have an important role to play! As a parent or guardian, you can provide positive experiences based on your baby's age and readiness. These steps will promote healthy brain growth for your baby.

Although sleep is not a sense, appropriate sleep development is crucial for optimal brain development. Appropriate sensory input during your baby's stay in the NICU will promote healthy sleep.

***Midline:**

- The imaginary line that splits the two sides of the body.
- With stability, arms and legs come to the middle.

****Stability:**

- Stability means that the baby is in a calm state and is comfortable.
- The vital signs such as breathing, heart rate and oxygen are regular.
- The baby also shows that they are stable when their face is calm (no frowning) and their hands, arms and legs are relaxed with slight flexion (bending).

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