

What is POETri?

POETri stands for

Positive Oral

Experiences Training



All babies benefit from positive oral experiences:

... *especially* babies born
premature

- Tastes of milk
- Familiar smells
- Licks
- Mouthing
- Soft touches
- Sucking
- Nuzzling

They need their parents and caregivers to offer careful, measured opportunities for oral experiences when they are ready to engage.

Our NICU has introduced POETri for babies born at less than 32 weeks to help us do this in a safe, cue-based, developmentally appropriate manner.

Where do we start?

It all starts with Skin-to-Skin (aka Kangaroo or K Care), the most important thing a parent can do to help regulate a baby born early.

Skin to Skin → Nuzzle!

*As **soon** as a baby is stable enough to go skin-to-skin and rooting or starting to suck, that baby is ready to nuzzle at a fully pumped breast. You do **not** need an order to nuzzle.*

Starting on POETri – SINC B

When a baby is eligible and ready to start on POETri, your team will write an order to start SINC B. This allows a baby to:

- Start to have **bigger tastes** to practice sucking and swallowing
- Continue to nuzzle, but now at a $\frac{1}{2}$ **pumped** breast
- Be offered a Positive Oral Experience **whenever awake** and alert
- Receive **drops of milk** while sucking on a **soother** from the baby's father and other caregivers
- Enjoy tastes of **pure milk**, without additives (these are added in from SINC C on)
- Have gentle oral experiences while **lying in bed** (sitting up and burping are not required) as well as when **held in arms**
- Get lots of **practice** to work up to sequential sucking and swallowing on a full breast or bottle nipple (SINC C and D)

Parents

You know your baby best.

Your baby looks to you for all that is familiar:
your voice, smell, touch, and face.

You are the **best** person to offer positive oral
experiences.

You are also the most important person in your
baby's care team.

You can help us provide the best care for your baby

- If you wish to breastfeed, let your team know. We can support you to establish a pump routine, position your baby for those first feeds, and help you both feel comfortable.
- Take a hands-on approach. Do all POETri (or SINC feeds) yourself when you are in. You can put your baby to the breast as many times a day as you both want. Dads, ask your baby's nurse to show you how to offer a positive oral experience for your baby's SINC stage. Talk to your baby's nurse to coordinate feeding and waking times so you can be involved.

Lessons learned from POETri:

- Building a feeding relationship takes lots of practice
- When we offer consistent feeds based on a baby's current skills and progress slowly as these skills, efficiency, and endurance develop, babies learn to feed very well
- It is important to adjust feeding schedules to fit babies' cues. Sometimes this means adjusting the time between NG feeds.
- Time at breast is more important than volume. If a baby latches at the breast, this is a successful positive oral experience. Avoid pre and post weights unless required; estimating volumes is enough.
- Together we are greater – ask questions, get help, give feedback, and celebrate success!