NICU Discharge Readiness

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Background

Following extended stays in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), families can be overwhelmed by discharge preparation and the transition to home. Literature supports inadequate preparation for NICU discharge increases: family anxiety, risk for hospital readmission and emergency room visits, as well as infant care issues at home such as feeding difficulty. This quality improvement project sought to improve and enhance discharge readiness in the NICU and to ensure families feel supported during their NICU journey and prepared for discharge well before the discharge day.

Initial Steps

Identified committee members with twice monthly meetings Evaluated existing discharge process, identified improvements Reviewed the literature

Factors contributing to inadequate preparation for discharge:
- Parents rushed on discharge day as teaching left until end
- Poor communication of discharge plan between staff members

Uncertainty with the actual discharge date

Insufficient availability of education in evening and at night

AAP Guidelines NICU Discharge Education

Parental involvement; Individualized teaching plan

Checklist of knowledge and skills for parents to master

Ample time allowed to learn and return demonstration

Follow-up with parent/caregiver after discharge

Action Items

Initiated Weekly Multidisciplinary Health Team Rounds

Developed a personalized discharge checklist

Created QR Codes for Parent Binder; Badge Backers for nurses

Initial Response to Action Items

Improved communication between multidisciplinary team

Identified need for additional reinforcement of staff education concerning importance of discharge education and documentation of discharge education

Identified need for improved communication between NICU and post-partum regarding discharge education and car seat education

Staff report personalized checklist as a valuable visual tool for families/caregivers and good conversation starter

What is Next?

Committee will measure length of stay, parent satisfaction and documentation of education to determine whether action items are successful

Continue evaluation of initiatives; make changes as needed

References
