



**THE
ROTUNDA
HOSPITAL**
DUBLIN

Family Integrated Care (FiCare)

FiCare Team Neonatal Unit

Rotunda Hospital

Introduction

Most clinicians are familiar with the concept and practice of Family-Centered Care (FCC) and understand that the best way to provide care is to form a partnership approach to health care decision making with the family. In FCC the baby is recognised as part of the family unit and thus the family is central to the baby's health and well-being.

Family Integrated Care (FiCare) takes the concept of FCC further by supporting parents to become primary care givers. The overarching goal of FiCare in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is to support parents in becoming members of the NICU team in providing active care for their baby. This is achieved by:

- Inviting parents to become collaborators in their baby's care
- Supporting families to participate, to the best of their ability
- Enabling families to be integrated into their baby's care through communication and collaboration with the multidisciplinary team

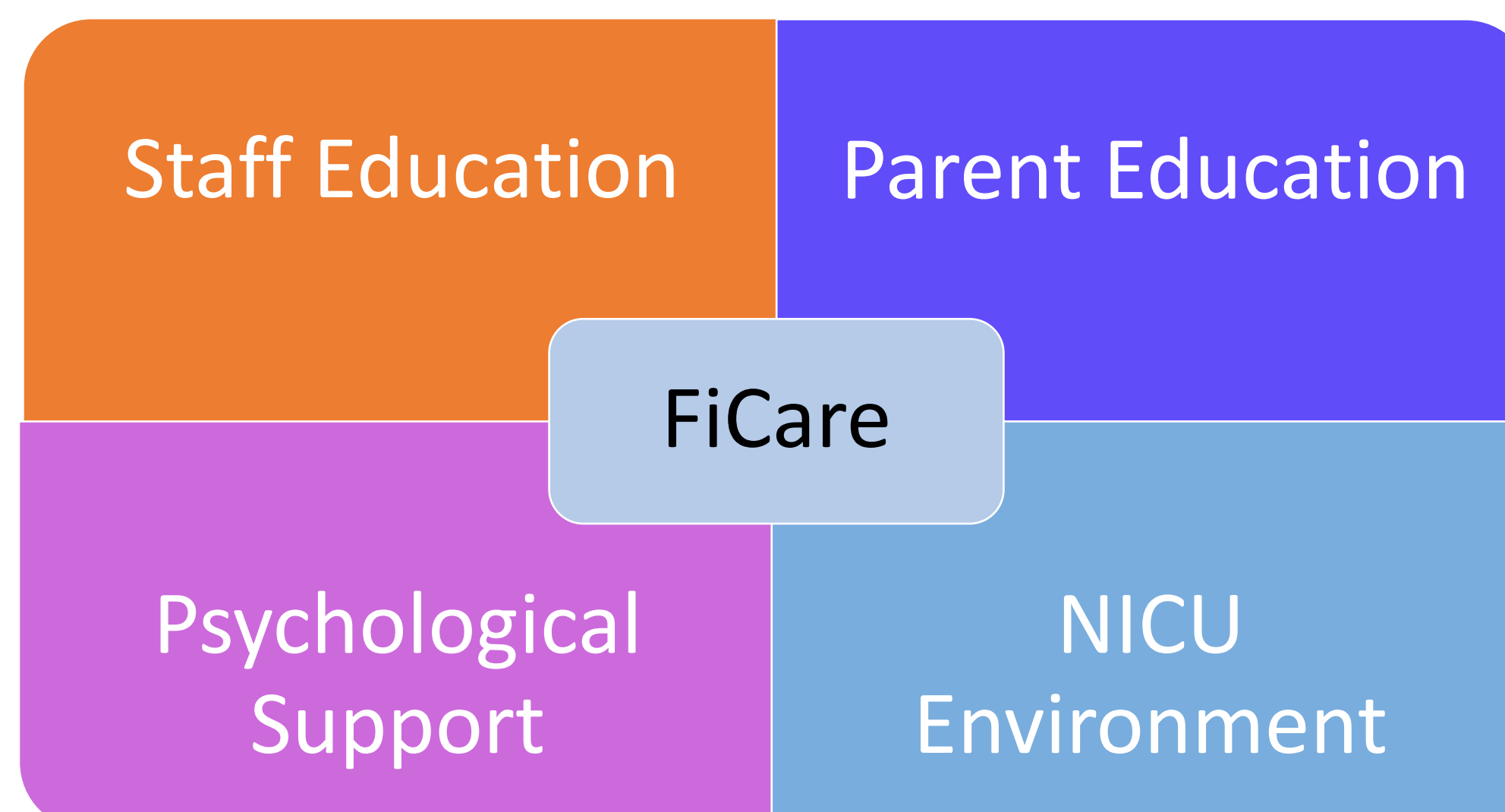


Figure 2: The four key components of FiCare

The NICU multidisciplinary team enables families to be integrated into their baby's care

Using the four key components of the FiCare model as a framework, the multidisciplinary team holds one-to-one sessions with parents with a view towards enabling parents to be integrated into the NICU team.

The **dietitian** provides information the importance of nutrition in the NICU for baby's growth and development, information on methods of providing nutrition, feed additives and supplements and the monitoring of baby's nutritional status. Furthermore, parents are supported by providing information on feeding and nutrition after discharge. Parental feedback to date on these sessions has been very positive.

The **Lactation Specialists** involvement in FiCare includes working in partnership with parents and their baby in a continuum from guiding mothers to build and maintain their milk supply through to achieving full oral feeds with mum's own breastmilk. Mothers gain confidence and competence in positioning their baby at the breast for optimal feeding. Starting with non-nutritive, pre-oral feeding and working with the dyad on skills acquisition and refinement, advancing at the baby's pace to achieving full oral feeds. This involves gradually increasing oral feeds at the breast, enabling mothers to become confident in recognising when her baby is actively transferring milk.

Staff and Family Feedback

Feedback on the FiCare programme has been encouraging to date as the below testimonials show:

"parents can actively participate so that they can gain an interest and boost up their confidence level" (staff nurse)

"the mother is so much more relaxed!" (staff nurse)

"I also liked being allowed to administer medication to my daughter" (parent)

"the CPR training was very helpful, I feel we both took home a lot" (parent)

The **pharmacist** provides a medication education session where parents can learn about the benefits of administering medication to their baby prior to discharge.

This training session includes advice for when baby goes home, including:

- administering medication safely
- checking the strength of the medication
- how to store medication safely and correctly
- what to do if baby gets sick
- how to obtain further supplies

The aim of the medication education session is to improve confidence in administering medicine at home and reducing parental anxiety regarding medication.

The **physiotherapist** provides an education session to talk to parents about the sensory environment for their baby and how it can positively influence their baby's brain growth and development through parental voice, touch, scent and taste. Together with the parents the physiotherapist practices how to promote physiological flexion, alignment, containment and comfort when handling and caring for baby. The physiotherapist educates the parents on communication and behavioural cues that baby is showing and about how to read their baby and respond. Information is also provided to parents about developmental assessments and the importance of developmental follow ups once baby is discharged home.

The **Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (ANNP)** and the **Discharge Nurse Co-Ordinator** provide parents with an education session on basic life support including information on what to do if baby is found unconscious, not breathing or choking. Parents are also provided with information on how to position baby for a safe sleep.

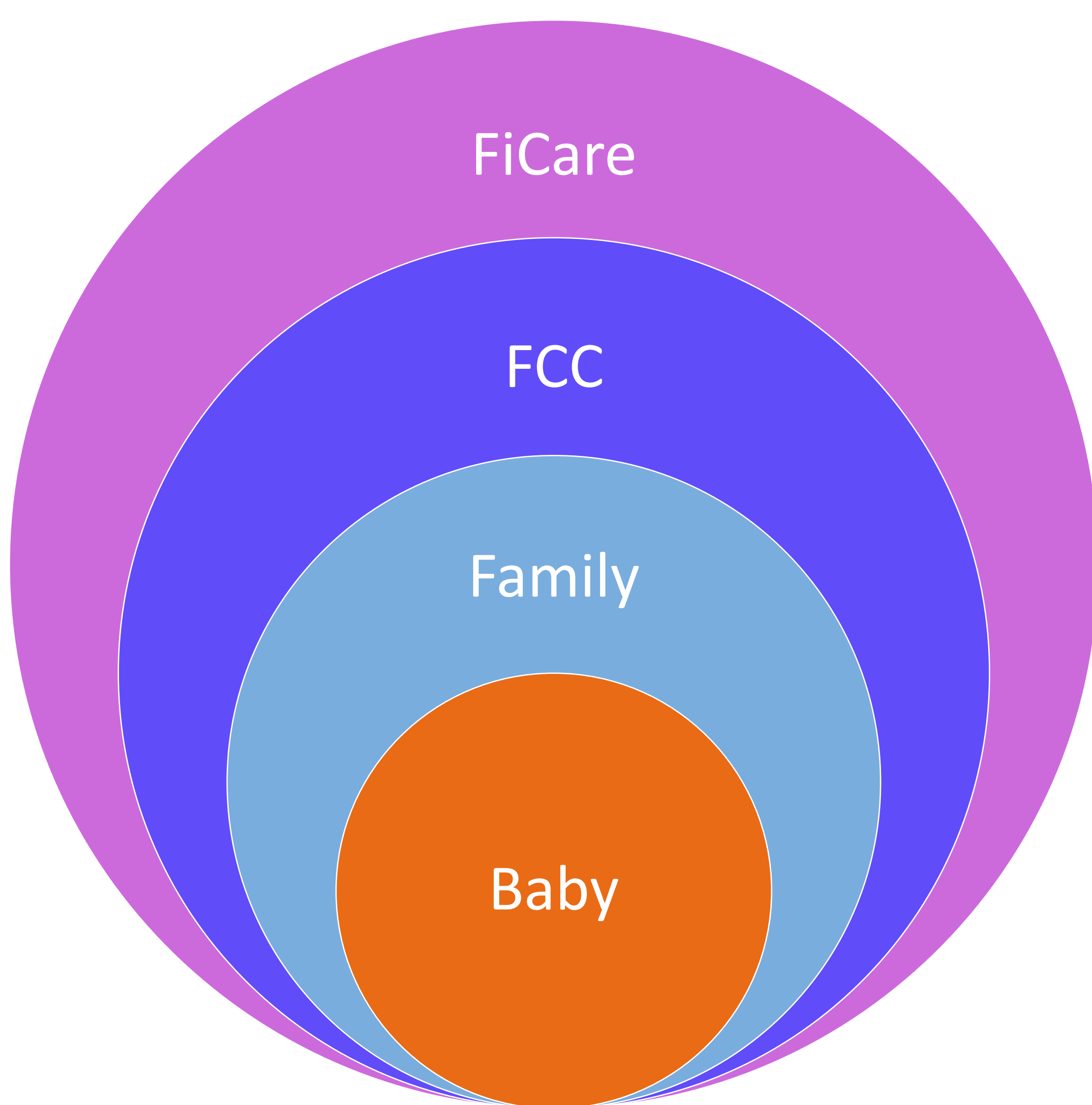


Figure 1: Relationship of FiCare with FCC with the baby positioned at the center.

FiCare at the Rotunda NICU

FiCare has been an ongoing quality improvement initiative in the NICU since 2019. Although the program was suspended during the pandemic, over 30 families have participated to date.



Above: Baby Emily and her family who took part in the FiCare programme.