

## EARLY INTERVENTION AND TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT

Infants being born prematurely have an immature nervous system and tend to have difficulty processing everyday stimuli. We have knowledge about typical development and implications of prematurity on development. We can provide information on these areas. Although a child does not have a neurological condition, it is important to ensure optimal development and stimulation.

We are specifically trained to work with babies to assist with typical development. The crucial age for babies to be assessed by an OT is from 3-5 months, and not 12 months as a lot of people would think. Delays in development can be detected very early, and not only once walking has not been reached at one year of age. It is beneficial to assess your baby if there was any trauma at birth, any illness after birth, hospitalisation or brain insult.

We also have completed specialised training in the General Movements Assessment (GMA). GMAs are non-invasive and cost-effective way to identify neurological issues which may lead to cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities. The assessment can be completed from birth to 20 weeks of age (corrected for prematurity). A General Movements Assessment may give information on how your baby's neurological system is developing if they are under 20 weeks post term age and there were medical concerns at birth (such as prematurity, lack of oxygen, stroke, or congenital heart disease).

Assessment of your baby's neurological system and appropriate stimulation for your baby:

- General Movements Assessments and full neuro-developmental assessments
- Motor skills to strengthen the body and ensure optimal movement patterns.
- Sensory stimulation to optimize processing of information.
- Visual stimulation (Asymmetry in eyes, squinting, lack of following of objects)
- Vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation

When to call your OT?

- Was your child born prematurely and is showing signs of having difficulty coping with his direct environment or disliking handling and touch?
- Is your child currently in the NICU or had to have a stay in the NICU following birth?
- Was your child diagnosed with Periventricular leukomalacia (PVL)?
- Did your child experience Newborn respiratory distress syndrome (NRDS)?