



OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois NICU taking part in nationwide read-a-thon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Sept. 10, 2020 | Peoria, Ill.) – Even the smallest child can benefit from someone reading to them, including babies born prematurely. Reading helps babies with neuro-development and language skills and is a positive experience for families, helping to give a sense of normalcy of being a parent, even when their child may be facing medical challenges.

“That really is a great bonding moment, not only for them to get neuro-development, but also for families to be able to bond and interact with their baby, even for the most premature babies,” explains Kristopher Rosburg, MD, neonatologist with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria.

September is Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Awareness month. As part of the observances, the NICU at [OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois](#) will be joining approximately 45 other NICUs across the country participating in a nationwide read-a-thon from September 14 – 24.

The ultimate goal of the friendly competition is to encourage reading by families and staff to the smallest patients at OSF Children's Hospital with an expectation of reading to each infant in the unit each day.

“There're numerous opportunities for the staff here to be reading as well as for the families, and our hope is that over the course of this read-a-thon every baby would be able to go home with a book, as well as have families bring in their own favorite book to read to their child as well,” says Dr. Rosburg.

Donations by physicians and neonatal nursing staff have funded the initial purchase of books. Organizers hope to collect enough books from throughout the community so that every NICU infant will go home with a book as a reminder for families of their positive experience in the NICU at OSF Children's Hospital.

“The family, even though being in the NICU was a very hard time and very stressful for a lot of families, that they could have something to reflect on that was a positive - ‘when you were so tiny I read you this book.’ And that can be part of that child's life forever as a thing to remember Children's Hospital and their NICU.”

Due to COVID-19 infection concerns, all books donated must be new. Members of the community can learn more about making a donation by calling (309) 624-0629.

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Children's Hospital of Illinois, located in Peoria, is the third largest pediatric hospital in Illinois and the only full service tertiary hospital for kids downstate. With 136 beds and more than 141 pediatric subspecialists, Children's Hospital of Illinois cares for more children in Illinois than any hospital outside of Chicago. Formally established as a pediatric hospital within the walls of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in 1990, Children's Hospital of Illinois has over 7,000 admissions, 2,500 newborn deliveries, and 18,000 emergency department visits each year. More at www.childrenshospitalofillinois.org.