

# Caregiver Experiences Transitioning from the NICU to Early Intervention

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## Background

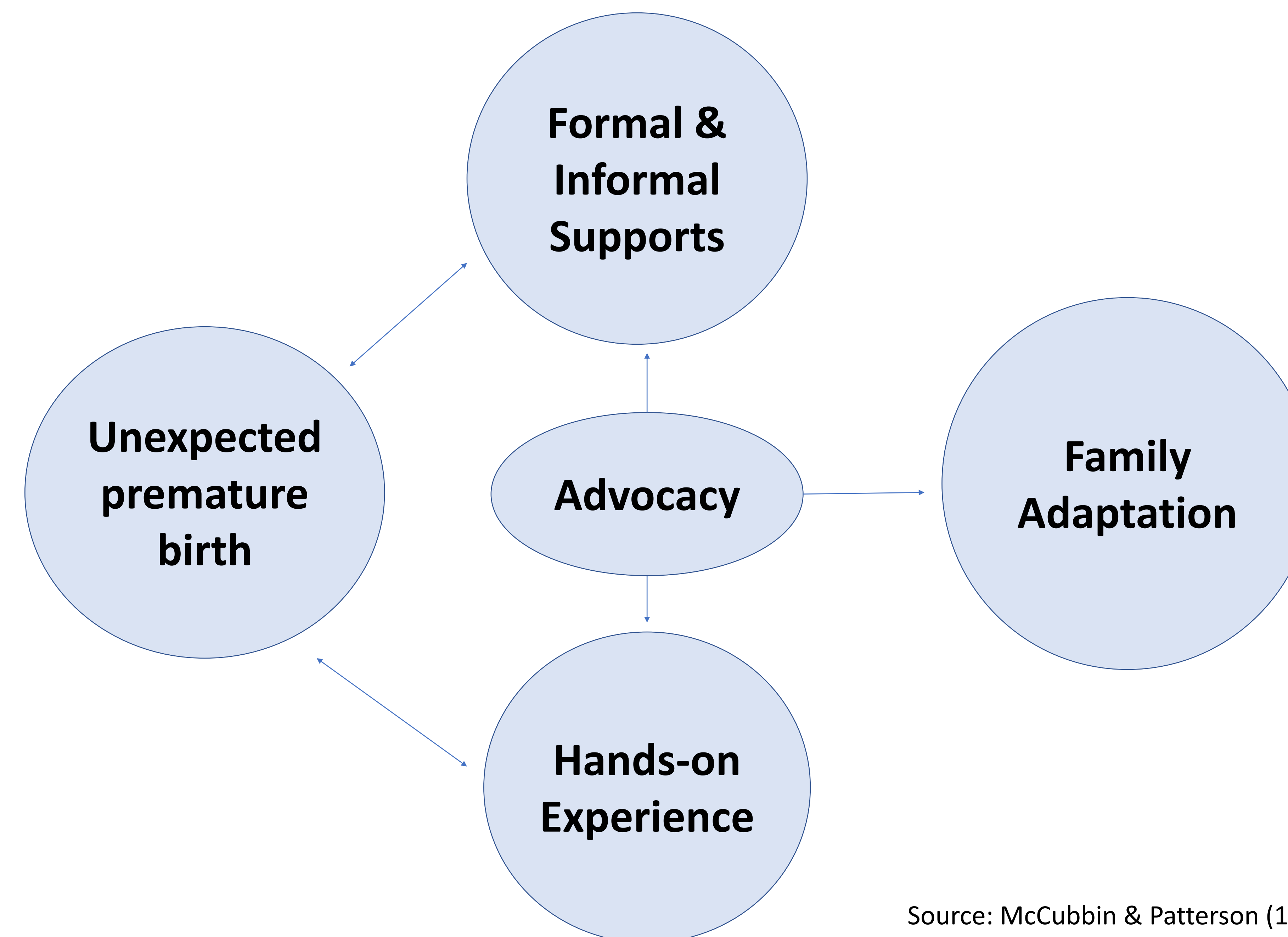
- NICU stays are both stressful and formative experiences for parents<sup>1</sup>.
- Transitioning home from the NICU can be difficult for parents. Increased information and support helps perceptions of readiness for discharge<sup>2</sup>.
- The experiences and benefits of early intervention services vary for infants and families from the NICU<sup>3</sup>.

**Purpose:** To explore and document the perspectives of parents and caregivers surrounding their transition from the NICU to home based early intervention services.

## Methods

- Qualitative descriptive research design
- Purposive Sampling
- Semi-structured interviews with 4 families
- Thematic analysis

## Results



Source: McCubbin & Patterson (1983)

*“Every day it was different. Some days were awesome, and some days were terrible. I don't think people really wanted to talk about the future too much.”*

*“Our favorite nurse, like the one who you would have thought this was her child..will forever have a place in my heart..”*

*“Every therapist really emphasized that they weren't here to just give her a one hour long exercise session..they said, we really want you to learn what we're doing so you can do this when we're not around.”*

## Discussion

- Premature birth experiences cause upheaval for families.
- Despite stressful experiences, parents find their time in the NICU as a valuable opportunity to learn about their child.
- Experiences of transitioning differ between families and partners<sup>4</sup>.
- An important part of this transition involves finding a voice as an advocate.

**Conclusion:** Parents adapt to transitions by forming a new normal around the needs of their child and family. EI services are just a piece of this transition process home.

## Implications

- OTs can play a part in helping parents navigate how to advocate both in & out of the hospital.
- OTs should assist in the development of family habits, roles, and routines to facilitate a successful transition home.

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