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Family-Led Care: Building Provider-Parent Partnerships for Improved Care of Small Newborns

In response to critical health system gaps for care of the small newborn, the Every Premie project designed and is piloting Family-Led Care in target facilities in Balaka district, Malawi.

Expanding upon Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), the central theme of the Family-Led Care model is building provider-parent partnerships to improve facility- and home-based care of the small newborn. The model strengthens provider skills to deliver quality services through clinical capacity-building (including counseling skills); builds family confidence to care for and monitor their small newborn through standardized provider-parent counseling and enhanced provider and parent newborn monitoring in KMC units; and improves post-discharge care and care-seeking through take-home pictorial tools and emphasis on follow-up appointments. Family-Led Care provides a new framework for engaging families as partners in care. Through improved quality of inpatient KMC care, increased family confidence and competence to care for their small baby in the facility and at home, and strengthened post-discharge care and follow-up, the model has potential to improve survival among preterm and small newborns. Implementation research on Family-Led Care is underway, and the model is poised for scale-up in Malawi and expansion to other countries. The model was developed in response to health system challenges that are common throughout low- and middle-income countries and can be adapted to local contexts to improve inpatient care and outcomes for small newborns throughout the world.