

Title of the abstract:
Strengthening Kangaroo Care for Preterm Infants in British Columbia (BC), Canada

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Kangaroo Care is a simple and effective intervention to improve preterm birth outcomes in all health care centres regardless of resource level. British Columbia (BC) government policies are committed to providing care “closer to home” and KC supports this.

BC’s initiative is funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Evidence demonstrating the longer-term effects of KC on demands for speech and language services and later employment were critical for attracting funding from beyond the health sector.

Our objective is to strengthen the integration of KC into the standard of care for preterm infants and implement KC at scale. This implementation science initiative applies a theoretical framework originally developed for low-income settings to a high-income setting to understand current practices of KC, barriers and enablers in NICUs, and acceptability and feasibility for families. This mixed-methods study includes an online survey assessing knowledge, attitudes, and practices of health care providers (HCPs), stakeholder interviews, a participatory action workshop, HCP and parent education, and the provision of a KC wrap for families in the NICU. Effective implementation and program sustainability relies on education and training of HCPs and families, identifying strategies to address barriers, and a provincial policy and practice guideline. The implementation methods will be evaluated to provide recommendations for the practice of KC.

By promoting a culture of non-separation of the mother-infant dyad and parents as primary caregivers, as well as investing in KC starting immediately after birth and for as long as possible, we can change the preterm infants development forever.