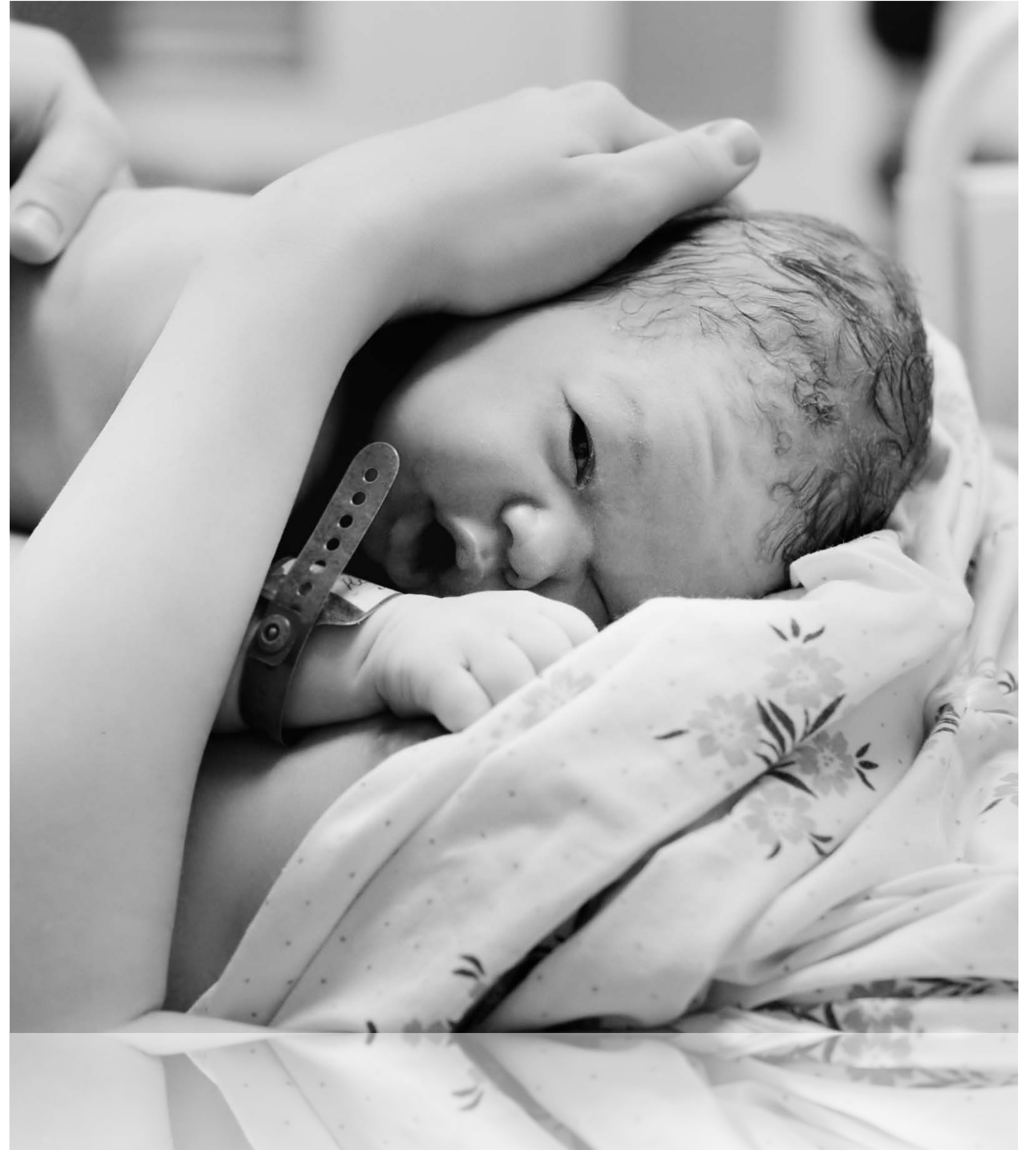


# **Understanding and Mitigating the Impact of PostPartum Separations of COVID Positive and PUI Mothers and Their Babies After Delivery**

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# Wired to Connect

## Infants are Socially Competent

- Neonates know mother at birth and have innate capacities to perceive changes in their environment.
- Earliest emotions are:
  - Distress
  - Joy
  - Interest
- Mother-infant communication in first few ays functions as mutually-adaptive dyadic system.
- Early mother-child interactions form basis for affective and behavioral regulation.
- Parent assists infant in regulating sleep, feeding, distress and arousal.



# Right From the Start

## Importance of Close Contact After Birth

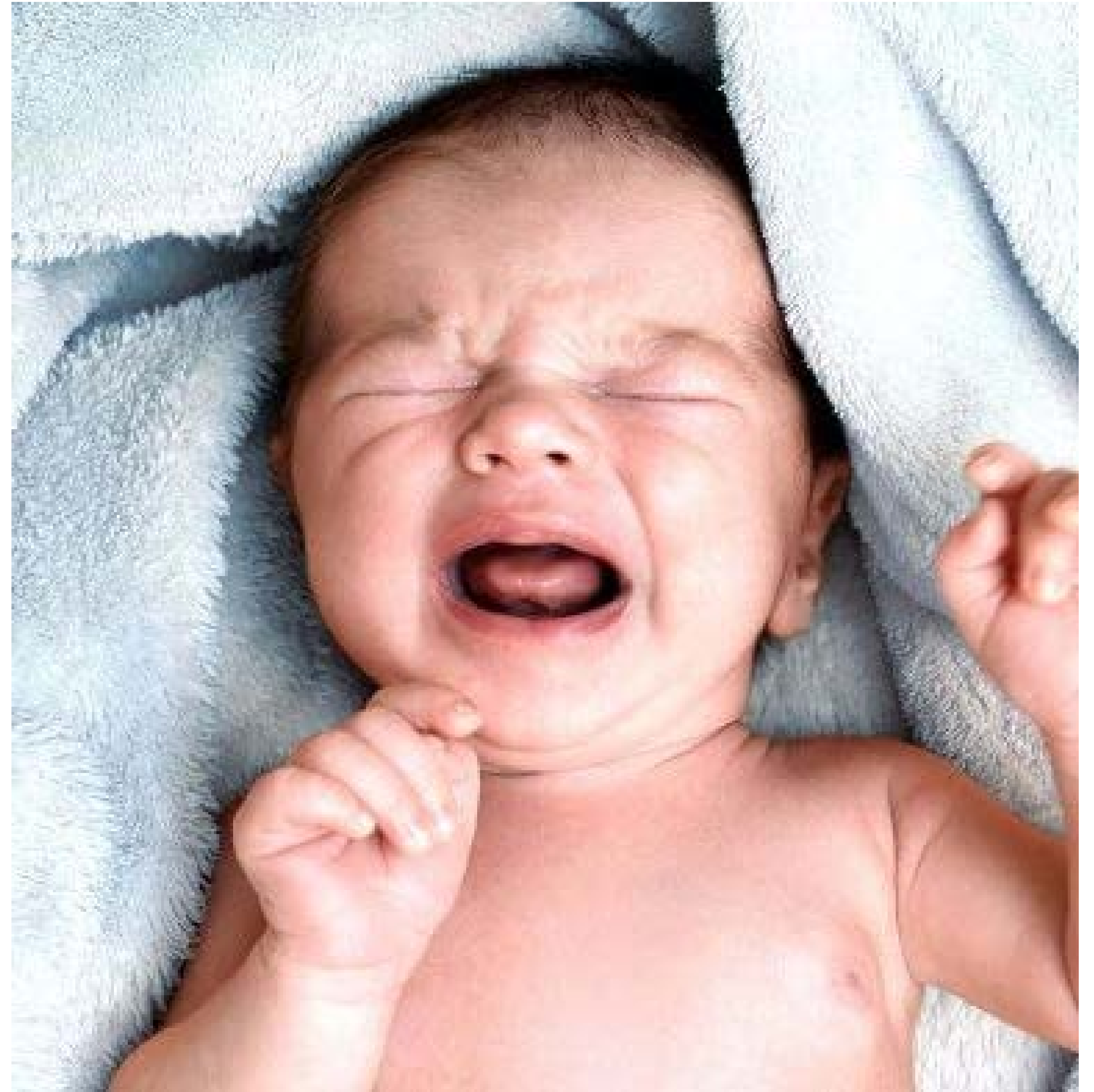
- Sensitive period after birth
- Decreased neonatal crying
- Increased maternal oxytocin levels which facilitates bonding and sensitive caregiving.
- Increased positive maternal-child interactions within the first year.
- Decreased infant abandonment.



# Separation in First Hours After Birth

A short event with potential long-term consequences

- Distress cry
- Reduction in maternal responsiveness and caregiving in first year of life
- Increased dysregulated and irritable child behavior at one year
- Animal studies suggest physiological impacts



# Longer Disruptions

- Research on premature infants gives us window into longer term impacts of separations.
- Interruption of maternal-infant contact initiates cascade of neurobiological changes and mental states that promote connection
- In postpartum period mothers exhibit less:
  - Looking
  - Vocalizing
  - Touch-contact behaviors
- Infants exhibit decreased social responsiveness



# Postpartum Depression

## A Major Risk with Separation

- Even absent illness, pandemic major stressor that increases risk for postpartum depression and anxiety
- Increased behavioral and relational difficulties at 18 months.
- Impacts infant language, motor, cognitive development



# Babywearing

## Kangaroo Care & Close Contact

- Improves temperature regulation
- Reduces oxygen needs
- Improves respiratory patterns
- Improves state organization
- Enhances cognitive development
- Enhances parental bonding and sense of competence



# Other Mitigation Strategies

- Recordings of mother's voice
- Facetime with neonate and mother so that mother can interact with baby in real time
- Go home with alternate caregiver
- Screen mother for postpartum depression sooner than 6 week visit.
- Screen mother-child for relational difficulties early
- Pediatricians need to be aware of separation.





Thank  
you!

