

# Baby Beats and Breaths:

## Therapeutic Interventions for the Premature Infant with Cardiopulmonary Compromise

Holly Schifsky, OTR/L, CNT, NTMTC, CBIS

### Faculty

Holly Schifsky has worked in pediatrics for the past 28 years with the past 16 years in a level IV NICU. She is a Certified Neonatal Therapist, Certified Neonatal Touch and Massage Therapist, Certified Brain Injury therapist, a member of National Association of Neonatal Therapists, and has completed 6-month mentorship in infant/child NDT. She has worked within the NICU and NICU follow-up clinic to maximize patient and family outcomes for the most complex premature and medically-fragile term infants. Holly received her BS in OT from the University of North Dakota. She is a faculty member for the Neonatal Touch and Massage certification; and Manuel Edema Mobilization training. She is the recipient of the National Association of Neonatal Therapists Clinical Excellence award in 2018, due to her clinical expertise and dedication to advancing the therapeutic interventions for NICU infants

Disclosure - Financial: Holly Schifsky receives an honorarium from ERI.  
Non-Financial: She has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

### Course Requirements

In order to maximize the learning experience during lab time, each participant needs to bring a soft body doll. The ideal size would be 10-15", but any soft body doll will work.

### About this In-Person Course

This intermediate-advanced course will focus on the cardiopulmonary implications for the premature or medically-complex infant as related to physiological stability, evolving motor control, sensory stability, and transition to oral motor skills that support feeding. It will focus on advancing the critical reasoning skills of the neonatal therapist to support the infant's ability to obtain foundational motor and sensory skills. These skills include the ability of the infant to cough, produce audible phonation, oral motor skills, swallow skills, trunk facilitation, gestational age appropriate positioning/handling to support the emergence of gross motor skills for postural stability. You will learn movement analysis skills (via lab time and video presentations) to assess breathing patterns, facilitation techniques to support trunk development, positioning strategies to support chest wall development, and feeding techniques to maximize postural control. We will discuss current literature as relevant to this topic and apply a systems theory approach for case study treatment planning.

### Learning Objectives

- Integrate chest wall movement assessment and treatment strategies to maximize infant outcomes
- Utilize developmental positioning and handling interventions to reduce chest wall deformities
- Assess the effects of invasive and non-invasive pulmonary support to the facial and oral structures as related to non-nutritive sucking and oral feeding progression
- Incorporate postural support with positioning and handling of infants for improved chest wall mobility during oral feeding
- Choose an appropriate individualized care plan for an infant with compromised cardiopulmonary systems, using a systems approach

### Audience

This course is recommended for intermediate to advanced neonatal therapists, PTs, PTAs, OTs, OTAs, and SLPs working with infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Help your patients achieve better outcomes.

## Schedule – Day 1 8:00 am to 5:30 pm CST (US)

- 7:30-8:00 **Registration**
- 8:00-8:30 **Updates on Evidence: Research to Support Material Presented on Day 1**
- Literature to advance neonatal therapy practice for positioning, handling, cardiopulmonary medical interventions
  - Discussion of resources available to further participant learning
- 8:30-9:30 **Typical Development of the Infant Chest Wall**
- Anatomy and kinesiology of the chest wall, ribcage, and spine
  - Developmental changes to the anatomical shape and function of these structures as related to gross motor development, postural control, feeding, and maturation
- 9:30-10:30 **Cardiopulmonary System of the Premature or Critically-Ill Term Infant:** anatomical differences, congenital heart defects, and vascularization. A therapist's guide for critical reasoning
- The cardiopulmonary system and the unique changes required for the infant to have a successful in-utero to extra-utero transition
  - Common congenital heart defects and effects on infant development
  - Post-surgical cardiac repair on the developing chest wall
- 10:30-10:45 **Break**
- 10:45-12:00 **Critical Reasoning to Assess Breathing Patterns for the Premature Infant, Effects of Pulmonary Co-morbidities, and Chest Wall Development**
- Premature infant anatomy, risk for pulmonary dysfunction
  - Common pulmonary co-morbidities
  - Types of pulmonary support: ventilator settings, non-invasive support
- 12:00-1:00 **Lunch**
- 1:00-3:00 **Assessment of Breathing with Movement Analysis**
- Components of adaptive and maladaptive breathing patterns
  - Use of video presentation to analyze and assess breathing patterns for infants in the NICU
- 3:00-3:15 **Break**
- 3:15-4:30 **Positioning and Handling of the 22-32 Week Premature Infant with Focus on Chest Wall Development**
- Rationale for positioning strategies to support trunk development
- LAB and lecture time for positioning and handling
- 4:30-5:30 **Case Study: Positioning Strategies**

## Schedule – Day 2 8:00 am to 4:30 pm CST (US)

- 7:30-8:00 **Registration**
- 8:00-8:30 **Updates on Evidence: Research to Support Material Presented on Day 2**
- Literature to advance neonatal therapy practice for postural control facilitation, development of musculoskeletal system as it supports cardiopulmonary function, feeding strategies for infants post cardiac repair, developmental feeding strategies for premature infants with cardiopulmonary compromise
  - Discussion of resources available to further participant learning
- 8:30-9:30 **Lecture and LAB: Musculoskeletal Positioning/Handling for the 32-week Infant and Older**
- Facilitated pelvis tuck
  - Abdominal activation
  - Transition away from developmental positioning devices and back to sleep
- 9:30-10:30 **Lecture and LAB: Musculoskeletal Assessment and Facilitation for Infants 32 weeks and Older**
- Spinal assessment for maladaptive breathing
  - Scapular and pelvic assessment and movement facilitation
- 10:30-10:45 **Break**
- 10:45-12:00 **Lecture and LAB: ADL's with Consideration for the Cardiopulmonary System**
- Diapering
  - Swaddling
  - Active prone for transition to Tummy Time
  - Oral motor development for pre-feeding skills
- 12:00-1:00 **Lunch**
- 1:00-2:00 **Lecture and LAB: Feeding Interventions**
- Anatomical oral/facial assessment post invasive pulmonary support
  - Postural support
  - Auditory assessment
  - Motor behaviors
- 2:00-3:00 **Infants with Tracheostomy Tubes**
- Effects on postural control development
  - Modification to therapeutic interventions
  - Postural control facilitation +trunk development
- 3:00-3:15 **Break**
- 3:15-4:00 **Advancing Critical Reasoning Using a Systems Approach:** Consideration of scars, fascia limitations, edema, and reflux (GERD)
- 4:00-4:30 **Case Study: Group Discussion and Collaboration Resources & Question**

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## Credits

This course meets the criteria for 15 contact hours (1.5) CEUs, Intermediate Level.



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Approved provider of the **FL** Board of Occupational Therapy-CE Broker –18 hrs.

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12 hours of this course qualify towards the discipline-specific hours for the 20-hour requirement for NDTA re-certification. They do NOT qualify towards the 8-hour NDTA Instructor requirement for re-certification. This course meets the criteria for 15 hours that can be applied toward the Neonatal Therapy National Certification. Education Resources Inc. 266 Main St, Medfield, MA 02052. Please contact us with any special needs or requests: [info@educationresourcesinc.com](mailto:info@educationresourcesinc.com)

## Dates and Times

**August 15 and 16, 2025      8:00 am – 5:00 pm**

**The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center  
Columbus, OH**

Register at [educationresourcesinc.com](http://educationresourcesinc.com)



\$475 fee. **LIMITED ENROLLMENT.** Cancellation will be accepted until 14 days prior to the start date of the course, minus a \$75 Administration Fee. There will be NO REFUNDS after this 14-day deadline. Registration will be accepted after deadline on a space available basis. We encourage you to register online!

**Live In-Person Course: Baby Beats and Breath: Therapeutic Interventions for the  
Premature Infant with Cardiopulmonary Compromise  
- Holly Schifsky  
☐ August 15 and 16, 2025**

**Course Registration Form**

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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