

# Beyond NICU Graduation:

## The Impact of Prematurity on Early Infant Development

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

### Faculty

Holly Schifsky has worked in pediatrics for the past 28 years with the past 17 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 with cardiopulmonary conditions.

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

### About this Live Webinar

Advances in neonatal care have increased survival of premature and medically complex infants. The unique sequelae of their prematurity impacts their motor, sensory, and feeding development. Ongoing support, assessment, and treatment interventions reduce the risk of severe developmental delays but require an understanding of NICU care practices and careful assessment of the infant's skill performance to mitigate atypical movement patterns. During this course participants will learn about the co-morbidities of prematurity including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, necrotizing enterocolitis, interventricular hemorrhage, metabolic bone disease, and retinopathy of prematurity. Information will be provided on term infants admitted to the NICU with the diagnosis of hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy (HIE), neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), and neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS). Participants will review medical pathology of these conditions and be provided with education on assessment/treatment interventions to reduce atypical sensory/motor skills that impact long-term developmental skill attainment. This course will be focused on skill development for infants term corrected (37 weeks) to 3 months (corrected or chronological age). **IMPORTANT! Participants are asked to bring a soft body doll, ideally 12-15" long, but any size would be appropriate.**

### Learning Objectives

- Identify three co-morbidities of prematurity and their impact on feeding/motor/sensory development for the infant
- Assess infant alignment and musculoskeletal maturation to promote typical motor control for functional tasks
- Apply two treatment strategies with positioning and handling using the provided case study

### Audience

OTs, PTs and SLPs working with infants as they transition out of the NICU to home or have prolonged hospitalization beyond term equivalent.

## Schedule – Day 1 5:40 pm to 10:15 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens  
6:00-6:45 **LECTURE: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Practices**
- Classifications of prematurity
  - Medical practices
  - Neurodevelopmental care
  - Co-morbidities of prematurity including musculoskeletal vulnerability and low tone progression
  - Outcomes
  - Term infant admissions and outcomes
- 6:45-7:15 **Transition to Home**
- Sensory Considerations for the infant
  - Trauma Informed Care
  - Attachment and bonding
  - Infant driven movement with progression to play
- 7:15-8:00 **LECTURE: Bronchopulmonary dysplasia**
- Pathophysiology
  - Impact on musculoskeletal alignment
  - Chest wall development
  - Airway stabilization
  - Weaning off O<sub>2</sub>, medications, fluid management
  - Breathing Assessment
- 8:00-8:15 **BREAK**  
8:15-9:10 **LAB: Bronchopulmonary dysplasia**
- LAB:**
- Segmental spinal control
  - Abdominal facilitation
  - Pectoralis facilitation
  - Diaphragm facilitation
- LAB: Oral motor and oral feeding**
- Facilitation of latch and seal
  - Oral Feeding assessment:
    - Positioning during feeding
    - Equipment selection
    - Gastric decompression
- 9:10-9:25 **LECTURE: Necrotizing Enterocolitis**
- Pathophysiology
  - Impact on development
  - Assessment
    - Perforation
    - Stricture risk
    - Abdominal contractures, poor GI motility, weaning of stool agents
    - Advancement medical considerations for Intestinal Failure
- 9:25-9:45 **LAB: NEC**
- Scar assessment (global application) and treatment (silicone, pressure)
  - Stool facilitation • Pelvic alignment

## Day 1 Continued...

- 9:45-10:15 **LAB: NEC and Oral feeding**
- Oral Motor interventions
  - Oral Feeding Assessment:
    - Positioning
    - Feeding equipment
    - Techniques

## Schedule – Day 2 5:40 pm to 10:15 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens  
6:00-6:30 **Updates in Evidence**  
6:30-6:45 **Musculoskeletal Impact of Prematurity**
- Muscle maturation
  - Metabolic Bone Disease
- 6:45-7:15 **LECTURE: Sensory Maturation**
- Visual Developmental: impact of ROP and treatment considerations
  - Vestibular maturation beyond term
  - Tactile maturation
  - Olfactory/Auditory
  - Multi-modal sensory impact on development
- 7:15-8:00 **LECTURE: Neurological System**
- IVH, PVL, post-hemorrhagic encephalopathy
  - HIE
- 8:00-8:15 **BREAK**  
8:15-8:40 **LAB**
- Upper extremity weight bearing
  - Rolling facilitation
  - Lower extremity weight shifting
  - Head righting facilitation (cervical segmental control)
- 8:40-9:10 **LAB: Oral Feeding**
- Oral Motor Interventions
  - Oral Feeding assessment and treatment
    - Positioning
    - Equipment selection
    - Techniques
- 9:10-10:15 **NAS and Nows: Lecture and Lab**
- Pathophysiology
  - Assessment: sensory, motor, tone, state regulation, state transitions
  - **LAB:**
    - Posterior pelvic tilt with head to heel rocking
    - Paired vestibular and tactile input
    - Frontalis lift, hard palate input, traction during NNS for increased lip seal strength
  - **LAB: Oral Feeding Assessment**
    - Oral motor
    - Positioning
    - Feeding equipment

## **ERI: Life-changing learning**

You love what you do. Our courses remind you why. As a therapist, you change lives every day – and have your life changed in return. ERI is life-changing learning, for therapists by therapists.

### **The ERI Advantage**

- Techniques you'll use the next day
- Peers who share your passion
- Renowned faculty
- Evidence-based courses that improve outcomes
- 30 years of life-changing learning

### **Specialty Tracks**

Learn with courses throughout the lifespan – neonatal, pediatric, adult and geriatric. Each ERI specialty track is designed to make the most of your continuing education time, budget, and goals. Start your search with us and plan every course you'll take in 2026.

### **ERI Rewards\***

Your ERI experience is more rewarding than ever:

- First course discount
- Bring a friend savings
- Group discounts
- \$100 off your 4th multi-day course

\*Subject to availability. Exclusions may apply. Visit our website for details and coupon codes.

Visit [educationresourcesinc.com](https://educationresourcesinc.com) for all your 2026 course needs.

## **CEUs Coming Soon**



\$249 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!

**WEBINAR: Beyond NICU Graduation:  
The Impact of Prematurity on Early Infant Development-Holly Schifsky  
November 2 and 9, 2026**

**Course Registration Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Needed in the event of an emergency scheduling change

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clearly print your email address for course confirmation

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_ Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn of this course? \_\_\_\_\_

Education Resources reserves the right to cancel any course due to insufficient registration or extenuating circumstances. We are not responsible for any expenses incurred by participants if the course must be cancelled.

I have read your refund policy above and understand.

Cardholder's name & billing address with zip code if different from above:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Amount charged \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize you to charge my:  VISA  MC  DISCOVER# \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV2 Code \_\_\_\_\_