

5 March 2020

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Story time for tiniest tots**

Even the tiniest baby can benefit from being read to – that was the message shared with parents at Russells Hall Hospital’s neonatal unit on World Book Day.

The unit marked the day by encouraging parents to read to their babies in hospital. The ward has its own small library of books which have been donated or bought, and has set up a quiet area for parents to read in.

Neonatal unit lead nurse Julie Marks said: “Enabling parents to read to their baby encourages them to take an active role in their baby’s care and development. It also helps to create a less stressful environment for babies and parents.”

Reading to babies on a neonatal unit helps create a routine and a feeling of normality in a hospital environment. It helps with bonding, even if the baby is too fragile to be held, and can get brothers and sisters involved.

Hearing a familiar voice provides reassurance to the baby and lowers heart rate, resulting in a calmer baby. It also helps babies recognize and work with sounds in spoken language, which is the foundation for eventually learning to read.

“Babies who are read to on a neonatal unit are more likely to continue to be read to months after they have gone home,” added Julie.

The unit is asking people to help expand its library by donating books suitable for babies. Anyone who can help is asked to contact Julie Marks on the neonatal ward at Russells Hall Hospital.

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