



Welcome to the
Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

CICU



**Boston
Children's
Hospital**

Benderson Family
Heart Center



Boston Children's Gail Federici-Smith and Family Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU), located on Hale 7 and 8, has over 40 beds dedicated to the care of infants, children, and adults with congenital or acquired heart disease.

Care is provided by a team of experienced and knowledgeable medical professionals committed to collaborative management.

**Take a video tour of the
inpatient rooms at the
Benderson Family Heart Center**



We know that you are the most important people in your family member's life.

In the CICU, you are essential members of their care team. Also, we understand that seeing your family member in the hospital can be a difficult, even overwhelming, experience. With this in mind, our goal is to provide highly-skilled and personalized care.

Staff members are available 24 hours a day in the CICU to answer any questions you might have regarding parking, housing, meals, internet access, and more. If additional information or resources are needed, the staff will help you find the appropriate resource.

Which patients are admitted to the CICU?

Patients with heart conditions who need continuous monitoring and frequent assessments are admitted to the CICU. While most patients are admitted after heart surgery, we also care for patients needing medical care.

What does the CICU look like?

While the CICU is an area of constant activity, we strive to provide a comforting environment for families. All bedspaces offer privacy for patients and their families. (Please keep in mind a patient's bedspace in the unit may change from time to time depending on nursing and medical needs of other patients.) The visitor area contains a sleep space that may be used as a bed for only one guest, a closet, a small safe for valuables, and a phone for outgoing and incoming calls.

Visiting the CICU

Parents are welcome to stay with their child in the CICU 24 hours a day. We ask that you wear a parent ID badge, which you can get at the reception desk in the main lobby.

Siblings of any age are also welcome. Child Life Services can help your child prepare for a visit. (Parents are asked to have siblings with any signs of illness to stay at home until they are well.) One parent may sleep at the bedside.

Sleep accommodations are not available for siblings. Our resource specialist is available to assist families who may require additional accommodations.

To ensure the privacy of all patients, we ask that you stop at the CICU front desk each time you visit. The receptionist will check your parent ID badge and let a nurse know you are here. The unit is a large place. Signs are posted to help you, and we are happy to escort you to the patient's bedside.

Family members are encouraged to bring a patient stuffed animals, blankets, music boxes, and pictures — but not plants and flowers. Please label all personal property with the patient's name to prevent items from being misplaced.

Cell phones and wireless computers may only be used in designated areas within the CICU.



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I contact the CICU and get information about a patient when I'm not at the hospital?

Call the reception desk at **617-355-1107** to be connected with a patient's nurse. We are happy to answer questions and provide you with information regarding the patient's condition at any time, 24 hours a day. You may find it helpful to write down in a notebook information we provide and any questions that come to mind — so that we can later clarify and offer answers. We are here to help you and the patient; we will answer all your questions honestly and to the best of our ability.

What will the patient's routine be while in the CICU?

Because routines differ by age and diagnosis, you can discuss the patient's daily plan with their nurse and provider. The nurse will explain tests and procedures and provide frequent updates on the patient's condition. Many diagnostic tests are performed at the bedside. If you have any questions or concerns not answered by the bedside nurse, you can ask to speak, at any time, with the charge nurse or a member of the nursing leadership team. You may also contact our Patient Relations Department at **617-355-7673** any time with feedback about your experience.

Where will the patient be transferred after care in the CICU?

Once the patient has recovered and is in stable condition, they will be transferred to the Acute Cardiac Care Unit (ACCU) on either the 8th and 9th floor.

You can help
create a safe
and healing
environment for all
our patients.



CICU Guidelines

- Only 2 people are permitted at a bedside.
- Please limit unnecessary noise.
- Plants and flowers are not permitted in the CICU.
- Videotaping and photography of staff are not permitted.
- To make sure we always have access to the patient, personal belongings should be neatly stored in the designated storage space in the family area when not in use.
- Please be respectful to your child's care team and the entire staff of Boston Children's. We understand being in a hospital is a stressful time; we're on your side.

Distraction-Free Times



Morning
6:30 – 7:30 a.m.



Evening
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Help us observe distraction-free time

Distraction-free time improves patient safety and is used to focus on your child's care.

- It can be at any time but is often observed every day during the nursing report from 6:30–7:30 a.m. and 6:30–7:30 p.m. to perform thorough, uninterrupted patient handoff to the next shift.
- If you have any questions, please ask before or after distraction-free time, if possible. To minimize interruptions, visitors may not be allowed entry into the unit during this time but may remain at the bedside.

Reduce the risk of infection

- Hand hygiene is the single most important factor to prevent infection. Please wash your hands often, especially when entering and exiting the unit and your family member's room.
- Visitors cannot have food at the bedside, although a covered drink is allowed.
- Specific bathing products are used in the hospital. Please do not use products from home before speaking to the infection prevention nurse.
- Patients will have their room and bed changed every 30 days to allow for monthly deep cleaning.
- Items from home (stuffed animals, toys, etc.) should be laundered and cleaned regularly.



Delirium in Children

A Family Guide

Some children may experience a sudden change in their thinking and alertness when they are in a hospital. They may become confused, agitated, or appear sleepy. They may have trouble understanding what is happening around them, and may see or hear things that are not actually there. This confusion is called delirium.

Delirium has several causes, including being very sick, a lack of sleep, and as a side effect to needing certain medicines. Those at higher risk of delirium include patients who require a breathing machine after surgery, need prolonged hospitalization, or have an acute medical illness.

Nurses regularly check patients for delirium. Please let them know if your child seems more confused than normal. You can also take steps to help:

1. If they wear eyeglasses or hearing aids, help put them on when they're awake.
2. Speak to your child in a calm and reassuring manner – share familiar experiences and memories, and remind them they are safe.
3. Regularly remind older children what day it is and that they are in a hospital.
4. Play soothing music or sounds they enjoy. Bring important toys or other items from home for comfort.

5. To help them stay focused, avoid overstimulation: many visitors talking, unnecessary noise from the TV or electronic devices.
6. Help them keep a regular day-night routine:
 - Keep blinds open to let in natural light.
 - Encourage them to be active and move in and out of bed, with the help of the CICU team.
 - Have family and caregivers spend time at their bedside.
 - Turn off the TV and electronic devices at night; soothing music and sounds are okay.
 - Stay quiet and keep light dim.
 - Ask an older child if they want to use a sleep mask or ear plugs.

Please talk to your care team if you have questions.



Newborn Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP)

Boston Children's and other hospitals around the world are increasingly offering NIDCAP to support hospitalized infants and their families.

What is NIDCAP?

- Helps create a supportive, developmentally appropriate hospital environment for medically at-risk infants and their families
- Teaches us what your infant expects for comfort and security vital to healthy development
- Helps create a partnership between your baby, the family, and healthcare team to provide individualized care

Why NIDCAP?

Hospitals may be a shocking place to both your baby and your family. Creating a loving, supportive space during times of extreme stress may have a positive impact on healthy development both during and following an admission.

Here are 10 NIDCAP-based recommendations that may support your family and your baby:

1. Plan time and be present with your child.
2. Be active and involved in your child's care. Ask your team how!

3. Shape your baby's environment to support a calm place to heal. Quiet in the room and a soft voice is best. Avoid extra noise from music or sound machines.
4. Protect sleep. Dim natural light when awake. Darkness and quiet for sleep. If bright lights are needed, drape a piece of fabric that shields but still allows your baby to open their eyes.
5. Provide slow care and respond to your child's likes and dislikes.
6. Connect and communicate with your child through gentle touch and a soft voice.
7. Engage with skin to skin and chest to chest holding (kangaroo care) when able.
8. Offer human milk and breast feeding.
9. Promote sucking for comfort and security.
10. Support your baby into a comfortable position with hands to midline and face and legs tucked.

Please reach out to the Developmental Care Program at Boston Children's with any questions or concerns:

Samantha Butler, PhD, NIDCAP professional,
Director of Infant Inpatient Neurodevelopment
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Christine Rachwal, RN, MSN, CCRN, NIDCAP trainee,
CICU Nurse Practice Specialist
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The PICU Up!™ Program

In the CICU, our goal is to provide the best possible care for your child in an environment focused on their health and well-being. Helping your child to be mobile — able to move around more — is a big part of our care process.

With our PICU Up!™ program, we will partner with you to find safe ways to improve your child's mobility. Our CICU is a safe space to be active.

Why is mobility important for my child?

Many children in the CICU develop muscle weakness because of their medical condition and spending more time in bed. This may keep them from doing activities they want and need to do throughout their typical day.

Moving around and being active in the CICU has many benefits. It can:

- help keep your child's muscles strong
- prevent delirium, which can cause confusion or changes in behavior
- shorten the length of time spent in the CICU

How does the PICU Up!™ program work?

- Your child will have mobility goals and activities as part of their regular care by specially-trained nurses and respiratory, physical, and occupational therapists.
- Some days, your child may not be able to do every mobility activity.
- You will also learn activities that you can do safely with your child.

What kind of activities will my child do?

- We usually start by repositioning or moving your child around in bed.
- We may do exercises to improve the range of motion of a body part, like the knee or elbow.
- Your child may play in the crib or on a floor mat.
- As their health improves (and depending on their care needs), your child may sit up in bed, get out of bed to a chair, or walk.

We will provide breathing support if your child needs it and only do activities that are safe for your child's care needs. Your input and participation are very important!

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

If you have any questions about activity and mobility, please speak with your CICU team!

CICU general information

- Spiritual Care is available at any time.
- Lactation support is available.
- A social worker will be assigned to your family to provide psychosocial support.

Boston Children's Hospital CICU Care Code

Your safety and privacy are important to us. We use Care Codes to protect personal information during your stay in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU).

What is a Care Code?

A Care Code is a number assigned to each patient in the CICU.

Why is there a Care Code?

Care Codes are used to protect patient privacy and ensure security.

When is a Care Code used in the CICU?

Any visitor entering the CICU is asked for a Care Code. If a visitor does not have one, they will wait in the family lounge until a family member has returned. All callers are asked for a Care Code before receiving information or updates on patients.

Please remember that anyone with a Care Code will have access to patient information.

Thank you for your support. Your loved one's security and privacy are important.

Your care code is:



**Boston
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Where the world comes for answers

Benderson Family Heart Center

300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115

[bostonchildrens.org/heart](https://www.bostonchildrens.org/heart)

Heart Center: 617-355-2079 | CICU: 617-355-1107