

MUMBAI

'First 1,000 days of a child's life are crucial'

**Akshaya Rengan**

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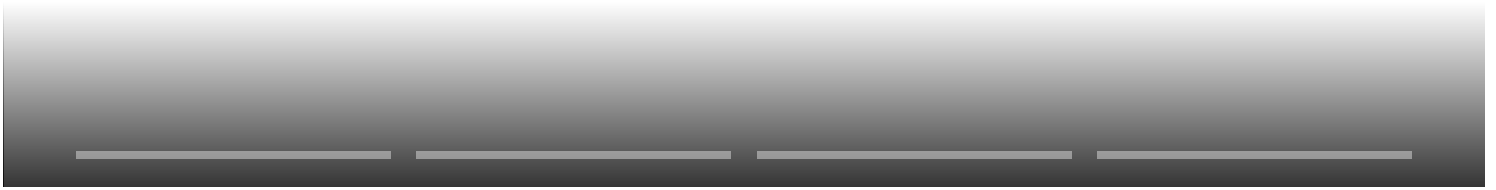
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Therapists seek training programmes, better awareness of neonatal care

The Association of Neonatal Therapists is rooting for training programmes to generate more manpower, a pan-India certificate examination in the field and better collaborations with doctors and nurses to improve neonatal care.

“Neonatal therapy is an extremely important aspect of neonatal care because it involves oral motor stimulation, feeding interventions and training mothers in interventions to improve the feeding of newborns,” said Hemant Nandgaonkar, an occupational therapist from Parel’s KEM Hospital, who provides neonatal care. Mr. Nandgaonkar was speaking at the first National Conference of Association of Neonatal Therapists in Thane over the weekend. The association is drafting a report to be submitted to the government and universities.

Paediatrician and former vice-chancellor of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Dr. Mrudula Phadke who inaugurated the conference, said it is critical for everyone to know the importance of the first 1,000 days of life, starting from the time a child is conceived in the mother's womb to two years after birth. "Having a neonatal therapist in every hospital is the need of the hour. Stimulating babies in NICU and providing responsive care is important. There are chances of delay in brain development, if proper care is not provided," said Dr. Phadke.



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