

Fact Sheet

NICU building materials healing qualities & 'green' features

New NICU Building Materials Have Healing Qualities and ‘Green’ Features

The NICU is about providing a high quality, healing environment for some of our most fragile patients and their families.

Lighting

- Light and life have been associated with each other since time immemorial. In the new NICU, daylight penetrates deep into the intensive care rooms through large windows, doors, and special glazing on the glass.
- Lighting controls in each of the rooms have been designed to offer a variety of different lighting levels and often many of the treatment lights can be turned off to offer energy savings as well as improved infant outcomes.

Indoor Air

- Improved indoor air quality was a driving force behind material selection. Whenever possible, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) has been reduced. Paintable fiberglass scrim and PVC-free materials have been used instead of traditional PVC wall protection
- Paints with no volatile organic compounds (Zero-VOCs) have been used throughout the project. The paint used has one of the highest ratings for indoor environmental quality. It is also anti-microbial.
- Finishes were carefully chosen for their limited environmental impact, contribution to indoor environmental air quality, appropriateness and aesthetics.
- Millwork, which is extensive in the new NICU, is traditionally one of the largest contributors to poor indoor air quality. To mitigate this source of contaminants, the millwork was fabricated with formaldehyde-free substrates, solid polymer countertops and low VOC (volatile organic compound) adhesives.
- Floor materials, such as solid rubber tiles and wood-lock sheet vinyl (Teknoflor), were chosen because they do not require waxing and stripping with disruptive machinery and odorous harsh chemicals.
- Glass mosaic tiles used in the unit have a low environmental impact and are non-porous. Tiles will not release or hold VOCs, and can be recycled.
- “Living glass” used throughout the NICU has plant materials imbedded into it to provide not only a pleasant aesthetic quality, but to also imbue the environment with life.

Recycling of Materials

- 90 percent of demolition waste was diverted from landfill through salvage and recycling efforts. (For example, old ceiling tiles were recycled and made into new tiles.)