This talk will describe the motivation, development, and refinement of creating a natural language generation (NLG) system to help inform parents whose babies are hospitalised in a neonatal intensive care unit.

In the United Kingdom 12% of newly born babies need specialist medical care in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) or in a Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). The length of stay for such infants can range from a few days to several months. Inside these units, critical life support, physiological monitoring, and medical attention are provided 24 hours a day. For parents of children in NICU, the need for in- formation that is tailored to emotional and informational needs is very much evident. The birth of a child that requires neonatal care is a particular circumstance that has the potential to cause a considerable amount of stress and anxiety for the parents.

The BabyTalk-Family project is an NLG system which generates daily 24-hour summaries of clinical data about a baby in a NICU, for the baby's parents. This is a system where it is essential that the texts generated be comprehensible to people who are not medical professionals, that the texts do not cause unnecessary stress and anxiety, and most importantly, the texts communicate the information that parents want to know. Is it possible for such NLG systems to not only just inform, but also to provide reassurance as well? In this talk we will look at the affective strategies that BabyTalk-Family uses to provide in an attempt to provide reassurance to it's recipients in addition to informing parents.