Two positioning devices made by Snuglbuds Inc. of Onoway, Alberta, have been found to be extremely beneficial for premature infants in the NICU and for discharge home.

1) The Butterfly Pillow
This is a very useful device to promote a midline position of the infant in supine and side lying by placing the infant on the support. It promotes head centering, upper extremity forward flexion, thus bringing the hands to midline and slight flexion of the trunk. The pillow has been utilized for several problems:

   a) Asymmetrical Head preference – Premature infants very often demonstrate a strong right-sided head preference due to their prolonged stay in the NICU where they are most often placed on their right side and the majority of the caregivers are right-handed.
   b) To facilitate easy removal from the seat should there be a problem.
   c) Inhibition of head and neck hyperextension. Head and neck hyperextension is often seen in infants with Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD). The butterfly pillow can be used to inhibit this extension and promote elongation of the neck extensors.
   d) In the neurologically impaired infant, the Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (ATNR) can be quite strong and apparent very early. The pillow can assist in centering the head and in inhibiting the reflex while positioning the infant in the cot.
   e) After the placement of the VP shunt for hydrocephalus, following the placement of the VP shunt, the pillow can be placed under the shunt and turn the head away from the shunt, thus providing a strong head preference. The pillow will help centre the head and ease any pressure points over the shunt.

2) The Travelbud
This is a device used for upright supported sitting for the premature infant both in the Care by Parent (Level II) Unit and for discharge home. It utilizes the basic principles of supported seating by stabilizing the pelvis, supporting an elongated trunk, and providing some head support. It has been used in the unit for:

   a) Car Seat probing. According to APS and CPS guidelines, all infants in the Level II unit prior to discharge are probed in their car seat for oxygen saturation. It has been successful in allowing the infant to pass the car seat test and therefore allow discharge home.
   b) Asymmetrical head preference.
   c) Inhibition of the ATNR. In the neurologically impaired infant, the ATNR can be quite strong and apparent very early. The Travelbud has been used in the unit in an infant seat for those infants demonstrating Gastroesophageal Reflux (GER). By supporting and maintaining an elongated trunk, there is no additional pressure on the abdomen and therefore the infant can successfully spend some time in an upright sitting position.

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*Note: For testing purposes only, the chest clip shown here is used incorrectly to facilitate easy removal from the seat should there be a problem.