

TECHNOLOGY HELPING NORTH TEXAS FAMILIES STAY CONNECTED TO FRAGILE NEWBORNS

MANSFIELD, Texas (CBSDFW.COM) – Technology playing a critical role in keeping premature and fragile newborns alive is nothing new.

Now, it's also keeping the babies' parents connected when they can't be right there.

It's called Angel Eyes and it's debuting at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center.

"Nobody wants to leave their babies behind," says Sara Watkins, while holding and cooing to her baby girl, Hope Joy.

Hope weighed less than two pounds when she was born and has spent the past 70 days in Methodist Mansfield's Neonatal ICU.

"It was hard, because, if I wasn't up here, I couldn't see her," explains Watkins.

"You want to be able to see your baby whenever you can."

With Angel Eyes, she can.

It's a secure, video live stream that families can access 24/7 through an app.

"I will be released tomorrow, so having this is somewhat of a comfort," says Saxon Wilson, while dividing her bonding time between her twin girls, River and Reign. "Nobody wants to leave their babies behind."

Not only does the Angel Eyes system allow parents to keep an eye on their babies when they can't be in the NICU, new moms say it's also a wonderful way to keep the babies connected to the siblings waiting for them at home."

"He's big brother already to three sisters," explains Wilson with a laugh, referring to her 3-year-old son. "He saw them on the Angel Eye on our phones, and he kissed the phone and he said, 'Oh, it's my sister!' and he kissed it. Before they even come home, they get to see them and meet them."

Watkins agrees, even virtual sibling access is huge. Hope has a 7-year-old big brother at home, Luke.

"He was so excited to have his sister, and it hard when she couldn't come home with us. Starting in October, he wasn't able to see her anymore because [it's] flu season, so they lock it down. And so once we got the Angel Eye started he was so excited because he could see his sister again."

And they both say the dads enjoy being able to check in on the newborns during breaks at work.

"It's a huge comfort," agrees Wilson. "I'm sure as soon as we get in the car we will be back online, watching our babies and making sure they're doing good."