

Single parents struggle to raise premature babies

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MUKONO. As the world commemorates the World Prematurity Day today, many single parents say they are faced with a lot of challenges in raising their premature born babies.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a premature birth is one that takes place more than three weeks before the due date. Mature births are supposed to occur at nine months of pregnancy.

Mr Godfrey Kizito, a single parent of a premature baby, told *Daily Monitor* on Wednesday at Nagalama Hospital during celebrations organised by Save the Children, an international organisation, that for the last three months, he has been struggling to feed the baby after the mother walked away.

"For the past three months, I have been struggling to feed the baby using bottles," Mr Kizito said.

Mr Kizito's baby was delivered in July after its mother developed complications following a failed abortion.

Ms Jeniffer Nalule, a mother of a premature baby, was operated on to save the baby after persistent stomach pains which doctors believed were a danger to the baby in the womb.

Stigmatised

Ms Nalule says besides the challenges associated with handling her delicate baby, she is stigmatised by her visitors who make fun of the weight of her baby.

Speaking at the event, Ms Jane Francis Nakafeero, a nursing officer at Naggalama Hospital, said there is need to create more awareness about the plight of the premature babies.

"Everyone should use this day to create awareness about the need to give special care to premature babies. They need a lot of attention which cannot be a role of only one of the parents," Ms Nakafeero said.

Dr Santa Engol, the maternal and newborn health programme manager at the Save the Children, said prematurity births rates are increasing in teenagers because their organs are not ready to carry the baby for nine months.

"As Save the Children, we are saying it is possible, we can do something to save these preterm babies," Dr Engol said.

According to Dr Engol, Save the Children and other partners will today converge at Nagulu Hospital to mark the day.