



Nathalie Maitre, MD, PhD

Professor of Pediatrics in Neonatology
Emory University School of Medicine
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Before medical school, Nathalie Maitre, MD, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics in Neonatology, Neonatologist at Children's, and Director of Early Development and Cerebral Palsy Research, had plans to become a cancer researcher, but that all changed when she fell in love with caring for infants and children. After getting her PhD in molecular immunology, Dr. Maitre went to medical school to do research with patients. Over the course of the years, she became passionate about the neuroscience of the developing brain and became focused on what she could do to help the brain recover from insults.

Dr. Maitre credits her son for inspiring her to pursue neonatology and especially, neurodevelopmental follow-up. "I'm the mother of an ex 27-week NICU baby. Even after spending three months as a parent in the NICU during my residency, I still really loved it. I started realizing the transition to home from the NICU is so important to parents. I became passionate about high-risk infant follow-up. As a parent, you'd do anything to help your child develop into a happy healthy adult. This means changing the world, because there are so many things babies need that we have to fight for right now. Research combined with clinical care, implementation science and advocacy is what transforms the world," says Dr. Maitre.

Dr. Maitre's research spans from neuroscience to clinical trials to implementation. Examples range from studying the brain of a single child to global health and transforming healthcare systems throughout the world. Her NIH-funded neuroscience research looks at the mechanisms of how the brain recovers after injury and what interventions she can design: by leveraging and developing new technologies and by involving parents in interventions. These approaches all leverage the neuroplasticity of the baby brain to help infants recover function and have more healthy and happy developmental trajectories into childhood. It's important for Dr. Maitre's research to have families as stakeholders to design studies, choose outcomes, and to voice what matters to them when participating in interventions.