



MELISSA PHILLIP: CHRONICLE

LOTS OF GLOVE: One-month-old Jalyne Fields is swaddled in a Zaky, a pillow made of fleece, in the neonatal intensive care unit of Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital.

Babies snug with handy device

■ Glovelike pillow invented here is now widely used in U.S. hospitals

By **PATRICK KURP**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

When Zachary Jackson was born 12 weeks premature, he weighed 1 pound, 15 ounces, about as much as an adult guinea pig.

Zachary spent his first five months in Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital, most of it in the neonatal intensive care unit. Chronic lung disease kept him on a ventilator.

In June 2001, when Zachary was 3 weeks old, power failures caused by Tropical Storm Allison shut down his life-support machines, so he and 78 other preemies were briefly transferred to other hospitals.

"I would have to leave every night because no one is allowed to stay in the neonatal ICU. It was very, very difficult for me," said Zachary's mother, Yamile Cendales Jackson. "Once I told my husband I wished I could cut my hand off and leave it with him. I felt so guilty."

Jackson, whose pre-

THE ZAKY

Information on the Zaky glove, which costs \$35, is available at the Web site www.Zakeez.com.

eclampsia, or high blood pressure, resulted in Zachary's premature birth, has a doctorate in industrial engineering and is president and CEO of Ringstones Consulting International, a project-management firm in Houston. The credentials gave her the know-how to turn her painful metaphor into a reality.

"I noticed the nurses would put Beanie Babies or rolled-up towels on Zachary and the other little babies. They said it gave them a sense of security or comfort. That gave me an idea," Jackson said.

Her idea, now widely used in hospitals in the United States, Canada and Europe, is named the Zaky, in honor of Jackson's son, who is 4 years old. The Zaky is a pillow made of soft, pliable, washable fleece and shaped like a hand and forearm.

"When they're in the womb, babies stretch, then return to the fetal position. They like the boundary, which is why babies

are swaddled," Jackson said. "When the Zaky is on top of him, a baby can stretch and feel the comfort of a boundary, but it won't interfere with all the needles and monitors."

Within five months of Zachary's birth, Jackson had readied a prototype, based on research she conducted and suggestions from nurses in neonatal units. She fashioned her first Zaky from a cotton jersey garden glove filled with plastic pellets from the inside of a Beanie Baby.

Jackson has since donated hundreds of Zakys to hospitals.

"There's now a big emphasis placed on putting a baby in a natural position, not on the back or belly," said one of Zachary's physicians, Dr. Brenda Morris, a neonatologist at Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital and professor of pediatrics at the University of Texas Medical School.

"The Zaky is both a positioning device and a comforting device. It also enables the baby to stretch and develop its muscles."

For questions or comments on the Health & Medicine page, contact raeuel.roberts@chron.com.