

# Nutrition Education Code BF-000-31

## To Baby, With Love: Overcoming Breastfeeding Barriers

### OBJECTIVES

**Class participants will be able to:**

- Identify at least one resource in their community that will help them with their breastfeeding efforts.
- Identify at least one person in their personal life who they will ask to support them in their breastfeeding efforts.

### MATERIALS

**TV, VCR or DVD player:**

**VIDEO:** *To Baby With Love: Overcoming Breastfeeding Barriers / Para mi bebé con amor: superando las barreras a la alimentación con pecho*, stock number 7781.  
Produced by Texas Department of Health, available in English and Spanish, approximately 15 minutes. To obtain additional copies, use the Texas WIC Materials Order Form.  
Please be specific if you want the **VHS** or **DVD**, and fax to Publications Coordinator, at (512) 458-7446.

**HANDOUTS:**

- *Breastfeeding Support/Apoyo con la alimentación con pecho*, attached; fill in names and phone numbers and copy as needed; this handout can be modified to add local resources.
- Available Summer 2004: *Support/Apoyo Pledge Card*, stock no. 13-06-12031 will replace *Breastfeeding Support/Apoyo con la alimentación con pecho* handout
- *Because My Loving Support Is More Important than Ever Before/Porque mi apoyo cariñoso es más importante que nunca*, pledge sheets, attached; copy and cut as needed.

**OPTIONAL HANDOUTS:**

- *License to Breastfeed in Public: It's the Law/ Permiso para alimentar con pecho en público: es la ley*, stock no. 13-06-10830, English, 13-06-10830A, Spanish
- *Addressing Your Concerns About Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding in Public / Cómo alimentar con pecho en público*, stock no. 13-179, English, 13-179A, Spanish
- *Dad/ Papá*, stock no. 13-53, English and 13-53A, Spanish
- *Just for Grandparents / Especialmente para los abuelos*, stock no. 13-06-11288, English, 13-06-11288A, Spanish.

**OPTIONAL POSTER**

- *I'm a Proud Dad / Soy un papá orgulloso*, stock no.13-06-11934, English, 13-06-11934A, Spanish.

**Note about new lesson survey forms:**

The first few times a new lesson is presented, staff and participants need to complete the survey forms attached at the end of this lesson. Please note that the staff survey form is different from the participant survey form. Only 10-20 participant surveys need to be completed. Please mail completed new lesson surveys to:

Delores Preece  
Texas Department of Health  
Bureau of Nutrition Services  
1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78756

## TEACHING TIPS

This lesson addresses common barriers to breastfeeding and is appropriate for pregnant participants. As with all WIC classes, please encourage the WIC participant to bring the father of the baby, her mother, and any other family members or friends to class. Family members and friends can be very influential in a woman's decision to breastfeed. Check the waiting room before you begin the class to make sure no family members or friends have been left there. If you send reminders, remind WIC participants to bring their loved ones to class.

When teaching this class, it is important to validate any concerns participants have about breastfeeding. To review techniques to properly validate a woman's concerns, refer to the *Peer Counselor Training Manual*, class 3, the section "Counseling with Love," at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/lactate/pcmanualtoc.shtm>.

## ICEBREAKER

Match each participant (or couple) with another participant (or couple) or break the class into several small groups. Have them ask each other what they know about breastfeeding or what they have heard about breastfeeding — positive or negative. Give them a few minutes to exchange information and get to know one another. Ask the class:

**What are some of the positive things your partners (people in your group) have heard or know about breastfeeding?** Give everyone a chance to talk.

**This is probably not the first time you've heard that breastfeeding is good for mothers and babies, and *all mothers* want what is best for their babies. But there are often barriers that stand in the way of breastfeeding. What are some of the barriers — or negative things — your partners (people in your group) have heard or said about breastfeeding?**

Allow the participants time to answer. Then, read aloud any of the following points that have not already been mentioned.

- **It's painful.**
- **It can be embarrassing.**
- **I'll have to change the way I eat.**
- **I don't have time to breastfeed.**
- **I have to go back to work.**
- **I may not have enough milk.**
- **It's easier to bottle-feed than to breastfeed.**
- **My baby's father (or my mother) doesn't want me to breastfeed.**

**Despite some of the negative things you hear about breastfeeding, seven out of 10 women choose to breastfeed their babies because it's healthier for them and their babies.**

**But having a baby brings big changes to your life and your emotions. New mothers have to learn an entirely new role in life and they can be extremely vulnerable to criticism and negative comments. Sometimes even innocent comments or questions from a partner, parent, or friend, such as “Are you sure that baby is getting enough milk?” can easily destroy a mother's self-confidence.**

## **INTRODUCE VIDEO**

**In the video you are about to watch, breastfeeding moms were asked what breastfeeding barriers they were confronted with and how they overcame them in order to successfully breastfeed their babies. Let's hear what these moms have to say about breastfeeding.**

## **SHOW VIDEO**

## **DISCUSSION**

**Even though the mothers in the video were successful at breastfeeding, they were all confronted with some barriers to breastfeeding that they had to overcome.**

**In the video, were any of the mothers worried that they wouldn't have enough milk?** Allow the participants time to answer.

**Most of the mothers or their family members were worried they wouldn't have enough milk. A lot of mothers have this fear. And sometimes it can be hard to tell if a baby is getting enough — especially when the baby is going through a growth spurt or a fussy period. But their babies were gaining weight, having plenty of wet and dirty diapers, and they knew the more often they breastfed, the more milk they would make. So they kept breastfeeding. Did any of the mothers not have enough milk?** Allow the participants time to answer.

**In the video, what did the mothers say about pain and breastfeeding?** Allow the participants time to answer.

Possible answers include:

- Breastfeeding will be tender the first couple of weeks.
- One mother said she never experienced any pain.
- Breastfeeding should not be painful.
- If there is pain, there is something wrong.

**One thing you can count on is that every woman’s breastfeeding experience is different — even from one baby to the next. But if you do experience any pain beyond what you would describe as tender or mild, you need to call for help right away. Any discomfort with breastfeeding will usually go away quickly once the baby is attaching to your breast correctly.**

**What did the mothers say about breastfeeding in public?** Allow the participants time to answer.

Possible answers include:

- It doesn’t bother me but I try to be discreet.
- Anyone who has a problem can just not look.
- A restroom with a separate lounge area is a great place to nurse.
- Some people don’t even realize I’m nursing.

**None of the moms in the video had a problem with breastfeeding their babies in public. There are many ways to breastfeed in public without exposing yourself. But just like anything else, it may take a few weeks to get really good at it. You’re not doing anything wrong. You’re just feeding your baby. And you have the legal right to breastfeed your baby in public.**

**What did the mothers say about whether breastfeeding or bottle-feeding was easier?** Allow the participants time to answer.

Possible answers include:

- They felt breastfeeding was easy.
- It’s faster.
- It makes going out more convenient.
- You don’t have to pack anything or worry about running out of anything.

**What did the mothers say about how they ate while breastfeeding?** Allow the participants time to answer.

Possible answers include:

- My diet didn’t really change.
- Spicy foods didn’t really bother the twins.
- High-fiber foods affected the twins a little bit.

**Again, every woman’s breastfeeding experience is different. Eat a variety of foods and eat the foods you like. If a specific food seems to upset your baby, avoid that food for a few weeks or eat smaller amounts of that food until your baby can tolerate it.**

**There are a lot of cultural myths and misconceptions about how you should eat while you are breastfeeding. Has anyone else heard anything about what you should or should not eat while you are breastfeeding?** Allow the participants time to answer. Validate participant concerns and counsel appropriately.

**Has anyone else heard other things about breastfeeding that you thought might be untrue?**

Allow the participants time to answer. Validate participant concerns and counsel appropriately.

**What did the mothers say about getting support from family or friends?** Allow the participants time to answer.

Possible answers include:

- Tell them why you want to breastfeed. Tell them how breastfeeding makes you and the baby healthier.
- Bring them WIC brochures and books on breastfeeding to read.
- Surround yourself with positive people who will give you a lot of support.
- Stay strong and stick with your plan.
- “Turn off” the people who do not support your efforts to breastfeed.
- Have confidence in yourself to make the best decisions for your baby.

**Some people are unsupportive of breastfeeding because they don’t know that much about it. Educate those who don’t support your efforts to breastfeed about the benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby. Invite them to WIC classes and share the materials you get from WIC along with books about breastfeeding. Do not let people who do not support you discourage you in your efforts. Let them know that upsets you.**

**Did the mothers seem glad that they overcame the barriers they were confronted with?** Allow the participants time to answer.

**How did the mothers feel about seeing their babies grow and thrive on their breastmilk?** Allow the participants time to answer. Read aloud the items they forgot to mention.

- They felt proud.
- They felt confident.
- They were happy.
- They were overwhelmed with emotion.

**Breastfeeding your baby can be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience and can build your self-confidence as a mother. But it may take a few weeks for you and your baby to learn the art of breastfeeding. That is why it is important to surround yourself with supportive friends and family and avoid the ones who don’t support your efforts in your first few weeks as a new mother.**

Pass out one *Breastfeeding Support* handout to each participant. Pass out two or three *Support* pledge cards to each participant or pass out one and have additional ones available to be picked up on the way out of class.

**The *Breastfeeding Support* handout is a list of places you can call for breastfeeding help and information. At the bottom, I'd like you to list at least one other person in your personal life whom you think will support your efforts to breastfeed or whom you want to support your efforts to breastfeed. Allow participants time to fill in names.**

**The pledge cards are for you to take to your family and friends. Take them to the people who will be a big part of your life after your baby arrives. When they sign this card, they are pledging to support your efforts to breastfeed. After they sign the pledge card, tell them you are adding them to your breastfeeding support list. Keep the pledge cards and *Breastfeeding Support* handout where they can be seen, to remind them of their promise to support you and your baby.**

## EVALUATION

**Can someone please tell me where you can call for breastfeeding help?** Allow participants time to answer. Answers are on the *Breastfeeding Support* handout.

Ask whether any participants would like additional pledge cards or any of the optional handouts. Suggest that they offer the father of their baby or their parent the brochure *Dad* or *Just for Grandparents* if they plan on asking them to sign a pledge card. After all, one thing their family members are pledging to do is to learn all they can about breastfeeding.

## CONCLUSION

**With enough support, you can overcome any barriers to breastfeeding. Start building your support system now. And, remember, the time you spend breastfeeding your baby is short — but the benefits from breastfeeding will last a lifetime.**