

Module 2A- Dads are needed for breastfeeding

What I learn: Fathers make breastfeeding so much easier.

Research shows fathers make a big difference for their babies and their baby mothers when they support breastfeeding.

1. What I can do to be involved when the mother of my child is pregnant.
 - Attend prenatal medical appointments and ask the doctor questions.
 - Attend ultrasounds.
 - If I can't attend, make sure the mother knows I am interested and want to be involved.
 - Ask questions about how the mother is feeling.
 - Tell her that I understand her moods may be crazy and that I won't take it personally.
 - Encourage her to eat well, take her prenatal vitamins and get enough rest.

2. What I can do to be involved in talking about feeding choices.
 - Attend the WIC class and appointments with the mother of my child.
 - Attend prenatal visits (and bring up infant feeding).
 - Share what I think about breastfeeding and formula feeding.
 - Share what I know about breastfeeding benefits.
 - Ask her what she thinks about breastfeeding and what she wants to know about it.

3. What I can do to connect with our baby [other than change the baby's diaper and give a bottle]
 - Give the baby his bath every day.
 - Hold the baby skin to skin on my chest.
 - Carry the baby around when he/she is fussy (this is not spoiling).
 - Talk to baby, sing to him/her, watch the baby's responses (a dad's voice is deep and calming to a baby).
 - Make eye contact with the baby and let baby imitate my face.

4. What I can do to connect with the mother of my baby while the baby is little.
 - Give her a massage. Hold her hand.
 - Take the other kids out or watch the baby and let her sleep for a bit.
 - Tell her what a great thing I am doing for the baby by breastfeeding. Thank her!
 - Bring her water and keep her water bottle full.
 - Ask if her if she wants something to eat and then get it for her!
 - Support her in front of her mother and others.

5. What some fathers might not like about breastfeeding and what I can say to help them understand.

- *“I don’t want her breasts out there for everyone to see.”*
- I don’t want that either! Breastfeeding is about feeding, not showing breasts. A baby can be breastfed in private at home, and a mother can breastfeed privately in public by using a shawl or poncho or private spot (dressing room/car/rest room) to latch the baby on.
- *“Breastfeeding messes up women’s breasts.”*
- Wrong- not any more than being pregnant and having a baby - all the same hormones make breasts get big then small.
- *“It’s weird to have a baby suck on your breasts.”*
- Breasts were made for feeding babies. It’s not weird, it’s natural.
- *“I won’t be able to feed the baby or keep him if the mother breastfeeds.”*
- Wrong- fathers can be a part of the breastfeeding; they can feed pumped breast milk, and there will be plenty of chances to keep the baby while the mother is out for class or to the store.

6. What I can do to support the mother of my baby with breastfeeding [other than change the baby's diaper or give a bottle"]

- Bring the baby to her in the night (and day) to feed.
- Wake the baby by undressing and changing him/her before a feeding.
- Unwrap the mother and the baby to breastfeed.
- Help position the baby to her breast- she only has two hands!
- Help begin the milk flow by gently massaging her breast if she asks me to.
- Burp the baby between breasts and help put him/her to the second side.
- Put the baby “back to sleep” in the crib/bassinet/Pac-N-Play when done feeding.
- Get some food or go to the grocery store and cook some food
- Clean up the apartment – it doesn’t have to be perfect.
- Take brothers and sisters outside or play with them.
- Go to the baby doctor/nurse visit to see how the baby has grown.
- Politely say “no” to family and friends’ who want too much visiting
- Politely say “no” to family and grandma who want to give bottles
- Politely say “no” to family and friends who want the mother of my baby to go to church/parties/events when she really wants to stay home with the baby who needs to be fed often

Module 2B- How we can work this out together

What I learn:

- Ways to talk with my partner about whether breastfeeding is right for our baby
- Ways to meet each other in the middle for big decisions like feeding the baby (talking, explaining and listening so both partners can share ideas)
- How to include the baby's needs in decision making (becoming a family)

Some questions for me to think about and talk about later:

What is my biggest hope for our new baby?

Why choose to breastfeed/ why choose not to breastfeed?

What would be good/ what would be bad about breastfeeding for my partner? For me?

What would be best for our baby?

Do we agree or do we disagree?

What do we agree about?

If we disagree, how can we come together?

by education (more knowledge for one or both of us),

by compromise (both give up a bit to meet somewhere new),

by changes of opinion by one or both partners?

So, why would you or would you not breastfeed?

What would be best for the baby and how does this fit into my/our decision?

Am I ready to make a decision, or do I/we need:

more information (ask the home visitor, nurse or doctor) or

more compromise (each partner gives up a bit toward the other's view point)?