

BREASTFEEDING Connections

July 2021

This newsletter is intended to be viewed online in order to access the hyperlinks. In addition to receiving it via email, you can access the electronic version on our website. Michigan.gov/Wic

This is What We are Missing”: The Value of Communicating Infant Feeding Information Across Three Generations of African American Women

The past several Breastfeeding Basics trainings have had a repetitive theme in conversation and interest- the history of infant feeding for Black/African American families and the generational attitudes about breastfeeding amongst Blacks/African Americans. Additionally, as we prepare for this year’s upcoming Black Breastfeeding Week and its activities, it would be appropriate to offer insight on infant feeding in Black culture.

It’s no secret Black lactating parents and their infants breastfeed at a much lower rate than any other race/ethnicity. According to the CDC, Black infants at 3 months of age breastfeed at a rate of 58 percent, whereas White infants at the same age breastfeed at a rate of 72.7 percent. It is, therefore, no surprise to understand part of those rates are due to Black/African American mothers continue to be disproportionately affected when it comes to positive health and birth outcomes. But why? Why does breastfeeding continue to be a public health issue for Black/African American mothers? The biggest contributors appear to be lack of access to support and resources, and inconsistent messaging and communication.

If access and messaging are an issue, for most, then where are Black parents seeking their information and support from? The answer is the Black family. Black parents tend to rely on their family and close friends to provide information on the care of their children- breastfeeding is no different. This information, generally, comes in the form of oral histories, storytelling, and narratives” told by their great grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers, aunts and other family matriarchs. For centuries, Black families have always relied on the experiences of their elders and ancestors to teach and guide on how to feed and care for children. Today, is no different. Black parents tend to consult their own mother and maternal grandmother for parenting advice over the advice of their health care provider.

Understanding the uniqueness and complexity of the Black family, and the significant role the Black family plays is necessary. Blacks are often bombarded with messages, images, and stereotypes of what it means to be a “good” parent from multiple channels; however, these messages may conflict with the complex relationships Blacks have with their bodies, families, and communities, and as a result of their historically negative reproductive experiences in White America. It is central to consider how each generation defines and navigates their family roles. As infant feeding experts and supporters, we should all be encouraged to explore the relationship of generational family roles and value assigned in order to best communicate infant feeding information across all generations.

Woods Barr, Alexis L., Austin, Deborah A., Smith, Jacquana L., Schafer, Ellen J.

Schafer. [T]his is What We are Missing”: The Value of Communicating Infant Feeding Information Across Three Generations of African American Women. *J Hum Lact.* 2021 May;37(2):279-288. doi: 10.1177/0890334421995078. Epub 2021 Feb 25. PMID: 33632016; PMCID: PMC8120634.

Inside This Issue

National BF Month	2
Collective Corner	2
Peer Counselor Q & A	3
AHEAD in WIC	4
CDC Article	4
Staff Spotlight	5
Equity/Diversity	5
Training Options	6-7
Peer Trainings	7

This newsletter is prepared for Michigan WIC Staff to help them support breastfeeding families.

NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH 2021: WHY WIC FOR BREASTFEEDING?

This year's celebration of National Breastfeeding Month features the theme [Why WIC for Breastfeeding?](#)

The question is answered by highlighting many of the ways WIC supports breastfeeding, such as *Skilled, Supportive, Staff!* Rather than a bulletin board, the artwork includes a series of five yard signs. There is also a press release, social media artwork and statements, and pop sockets. There is social media artwork for Native and Black Breastfeeding Week too. WIC will host a panel discussion for Black Breastfeeding Week.

Other themes for celebrating breastfeeding in August include:

- ◆ [National Breastfeeding Month](#) "Every Step of the Way"
- ◆ [World Breastfeeding Week's](#) "Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility"
- ◆ [Native Breastfeeding Week's](#) "Nourishing Our Futures"
- ◆ [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Week's](#) "Reclaiming Our Traditions"
- ◆ [Black Breastfeeding Week's](#) The Big Pause: Collective Rest for Collective Power



COFFECTIVE CORNER

We continue to be amazed at the passion and dedication local WIC agencies have demonstrated when supporting their clients during the pandemic. We understand it may be challenging to share educational resources with families remotely. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- For contacts over the phone, verbally review key messages within your chosen material.
- For virtual contacts, utilize your platform's screen-sharing capabilities to help walk your client through the material.
- In either case, ask your client if they are interested in receiving these materials via mail or email. If so, allow your families time to review material sent and schedule a callback at a later date to answer any questions they may have.

Many local agencies have stated that they are unaware of Coffective materials available to them as well as how to obtain them. Your thoughts have been heard and we are happy to share this information with you!

- Coffective Tools Available to Michigan [WIC Agencies](#)
- WIC Materials Available to Michigan [Maternal Child Health Partners](#)

If you have any questions about how best to utilize Coffective resources in your agency, we are here for you! Feel free to reach out to Marji (CyrulM@michigan.gov) for guidance.

Dear Winnie,

I have a breastfeeding client who is afraid of her baby biting her. How can I help her?

Signed,
Remarkable Michigan Peer Counselor

Dear Remarkable PC,

This topic is enough to make any pregnant or breastfeeding parent shudder at the thought. Breastfeeding can most certainly be a challenge for nursing families when their babies start teething or biting. Let's talk about strategies and techniques you can share with your families.

Set the tone of the discussion:

- Congratulate her for asking for help as teething and biting can be difficult.
- Ask your client why she decided to breastfeed in the first place. Reflect on these reasons to encourage her to keep pushing forward.

Affirm your client's feelings with statements, such as:

- "I understand why biting might concern you! I had the same fear with my baby."
- "Your fear is valid. You are not alone!"

Use probing questions such as:

- "Would you consider breastfeeding if I shared some helpful tips with you?"
- "Tell me what you have heard from others to keep your baby from biting you."

Helpful tips for your client:

- Babies rarely bite during active nursing. Unlatch your baby as soon she loses interest in nursing. Slip a clean finger between her gums to release your nipple.
- Give your baby complete attention by making eye contact, singing to her, or stroking her cheek or arm. Some babies may bite to get your attention.
- Biting might get worse if your baby is teething. It will lessen when your baby's teeth break through their gums.
- Look for things that cause your baby to bite. Is it when the dog barks? When the phone rings? Try to limit these distractions.
- Teething and biting can be a pain (literally!) Thank you for all you do to help support your families with such a tough issue!

Your Breastfeeding Partner,
Winnie

In recognition of Winnie's contributions to the Peer Counselor Program from 2001-2021, we are continuing the "Dear Winnie" column in her name. Written by Kristina Doyle.

Listen, Observe, Validate, Empower.

ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY TO ACHIEVE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (AHEAD) IN WIC

In July 2020, [Stacy Davis](#) was announced as one of seven (7) Healthy Equity Champions (HEC) for the National WIC Association's Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion (AHEAD) in WIC project. As part of the project, Stacy, and the other HECs, participated in an 6-week long intensive health equity curriculum. Currently, the HECs are working towards revising the peer learning curriculum to address the health equity issues reported in the landscape survey, which was widely distributed earlier this year.

Additionally, the request for AHEAD sub-grant proposals closed on June 7, 2021. The HECs will spend June 8th-30th reviewing RFP submissions to identify seven (7) sub-grantees. Stacy Davis will provide mentoring and leadership to one of the seven (7) awardees. Stay tuned to the announcement of sub-grantees and their projects!



CDC EXAMINES DISPARITIES IN BREASTFEEDING INITIATION

CDC researchers found that the overall prevalence of breastfeeding initiation was 84.1%, with variation by maternal race or ethnicity, from 90.3% among infants of Asian women to 73.6% among infants of Black women. The findings in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report also showed that the magnitude of the difference between the highest and lowest breastfeeding rates by racial or ethnic groups differed across states.

Full Story: [Physician's Briefing/HealthDay News \(5/28\)](#)

BREASTFEEDING STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Hi, my name is Amber Tinsley and I serve in the role of Lactation Specialist for the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) WIC program. OLHSA services clients in the Metropolitan Detroit area and I work at the Pontiac clinic.

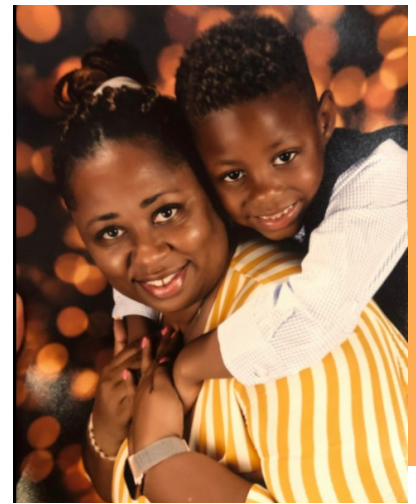
My favorite part about being in this role is bonding with the moms and their kids and letting them know that I am here for them. One thing that I would like everyone to know about breastfeeding is that not only is it great for the baby, but I personally would not have traded the bonding time that I spent with my own baby. So, breastfeeding is great for that bonding time for moms too!

On a personal note, I breastfed my son just shy of 3 years. I was lucky that we were able to get off to a great start and able to overcome one minor challenge with support.

I would describe myself as a free-spirit and I love watching my son compete in swimming, baseball, basketball, and soccer. Some other activities that I am involved in include coaching high school sports (basketball, volleyball, and track). I am often at the pool watching my son swim. He amazes me at how well he has done in the short amount of time that he has been competing. I also love to travel to show different places to my son. We LOVE to cruise!!!

Words of wisdom that I have for the circle of support (family members, friends, etc.) for our breastfeeding moms: Educate, support, and love!! Mom is doing what is best for her baby when she chooses to breastfeed.

Amber has been a member of the OLHSA WIC Breastfeeding Team since 2018.



EQUITY AND DIVERSITY STATE UPDATES

Governor Whitmer has proclaimed June as [Pride Month in Michigan](#). The WIC Division's DEI Committee is committed to lifting up diversity/inclusion and celebrating it. In addition to recognizing June as Pride Month, the group is brainstorming ways to incorporate more gender inclusive language in WIC promotional materials and when certifying clients during WIC appointments. The committee is also working on identifying DEI and Racial Equity goals to include in the WIC DEI action plan. The group strongly believes that advancing breastfeeding in the State through an equity framework is a key priority and will continue to develop goals and metrics related to this to include in the WIC DEI action plan.



The launching of the WIC Breastfeeding Supporters of Color Network took place in May. The May meetings had a diverse regional representation including from the UP. The meetings will take place monthly. June and July meetings will focus on the discussion of challenges facing communities of color as well as preparation to plan events/activities for Native and Black Breastfeeding Weeks during the month of August. The group is for breastfeeding peers, lactation consultants, and other breastfeeding staff identifying with a community of color or other marginalized community to engage with the State WIC office. The goal is to support one another as workers and advocate for those who identify with the groups aforementioned. Please consider being a part of these conversations if you are part of the breastfeeding staff and identify as belonging to a community of color or marginalized community. If interested, please email Dionne Moore-Smith: mooresmithD@michigan.gov for more details.

2021 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Visit the [Provider Education](#) section of the MDHHS WIC Staff Breastfeeding page. There are a variety of webinars and conferences available here.

Date	Time	Organization	Title	Link
July				
July 20, 2021	Launch on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8am EST. Webinars are available to watch for up to 1 year after the air date.	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Breastfeeding Fundamentals & the Workplace Tamika White, CLS	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
August				
Aug 17, 2021	Launch on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8am EST. Webinars are available to watch for up to 1 year after the air date.	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Breast/Chest feeding as a Political Act Mariposa	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
Aug 30, 2021 – Sept 2, 2021	Varies depending on in-person or on-line experience.	International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)	ILCA 2021 Conference	https://www.eventscribe.net/2021/ILCA/aaStatic.asp?SFP=QkJFWIZKREpANzczMkBNYWluE1hcmtldGluZyBQYWdl
September				
Sept 9 & 10, 2021	9:00 AM to 12:30 PM EST	Baystate Health Lactation Services	Achieving Breastfeeding/ Chest feeding Success in Unique Situations Webinar Annual Breastfeeding Conference	https://education.baystatehealth.org/sites/default/files/2021%20Brochure%20-%20Breastfeeding%20Virtual%20Conference.pdf
Sept 21, 2021	Launch on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8am EST. Webinars are available to watch for up to 1 year after the air date.	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Expanding Expectations and Building resilience: Empowering Parents for Successful Breastfeeding Lindsey McGahey, IBC	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/

Continued on Page 7

Date	Time	Organization	Title	Link
October				
Oct 19, 2021	Launch on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8am EST. Webinars are available to watch for up to 1 year after the air date.	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Lactation Education and Representation Angie Sanchez, IBC	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
November				
Nov 4, 2021	8:30 AM to 10:30 AM EST	Breastfeeding Grand Rounds: School of Public Health University of Albany	Marijuana and Breastfeeding	https://www.albany.edu/cphce/bfgr.shtml
Archived Webinars				
Available anytime.	Archived Webinar	Breastfeeding Grand Rounds School of Public Health University of Albany	Community Breastfeeding Support in A Time of Public Health Emergencies	Breastfeeding Grand Rounds (albany.edu)

UPCOMING PEER COUNSELOR TRAININGS

Peer Update

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Theme: The Power of Peers

9:00 am—2:00 pm (virtual)

Registration is Open:

<https://miwicevents.com/breastfeeding-peer-update/>



SAVE THE DATE!

Regional Peer Counselor Training

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Main Topic: Color Code Presentation

9:00 am—3:00 pm (virtual)

Registration to open in August

Breastfeeding Coordinators are invited to register for the Regional Training this year and attend the morning session (Color Code Presentation)

Questions/Comments? E-mail: CyrulM@michigan.gov

