

Understanding Your Baby

Breastfeeding and behavior

WHO: Pregnant mothers enrolled in WIC; focusing on mothers who plan to breastfeed. The topic will be presented in English and Spanish to participants of various educational levels and ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 2-15 participants per session. Educator is WIC staff (WNA or RD). One facilitator per group session.

WHY: Despite extensive nutrition education provided to WIC participants, many do not comply with infant-feeding guidelines. It is common for participants to formula-feed, overfeed, introduce solid foods early, or give inappropriate foods and fluids to infants. Recent focus groups of WIC mothers concluded that 22% introduced solid foods prior to 4 months old. Some behavioral beliefs associated with the early introduction of solid foods were:

- o babies cry because of hunger (formula and cereal prevent hunger)
- o “When I gave formula, the baby no longer cried and slept, and that is when I decided not to give him breast milk.”

Future interventions (classes) must address issues that are important to mothers (e.g. full=quiet sleeping infants).¹

WHEN: Group sessions are held during scheduled WIC visits. Estimated learning time is 30-45 minutes. The time is 30 minutes without the video.

WHERE: Sessions are conducted in the classrooms with chairs in a semi-circular arrangement.

WHAT: 14 steps to successful breastfeeding
Introduction to infant cues-what is your baby trying to tell you?
Infant sleep-what is normal?

WHAT FOR: You (the participant) will have:

1. Shared what worries you about becoming a new mom.
2. Discovered steps to aid in successful breastfeeding.
3. Practiced reading and responding to a baby’s cues.
4. Identified normal infant sleep patterns.

MATERIALS:

Posters: Baby’s Talking (Poster 1)
Why Babies Cry (Poster 2)
Baby’s Sleeping: Let’s Guess (Poster 3)
Understanding your baby’s sleep (Poster 4)

Props: Sleep story cards w/ photo on one side, story text on other
Cards for Active and Quiet sleep (4 each)
Basket of multiple cards labeled cues, sleep, or feeding

Materials: Flipchart or whiteboard & pens
Sticky notes
Breastfeeding video (optional)

Handouts: Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby
Why Babies Cry?
Calendar- Getting to know your baby
Understanding Your Baby’s Cues

KEY



Use flipchart



Pass out handout



Question for the group



Pairs activity



Hands on activity



Writing activity

HOW: (session directions follow)

Introduction

“Welcome to “Understanding Your Baby: Breastfeeding and Behavior.” My name is _____ and I will be your group leader for this short interactive class. In today’s class, we’re going to talk about getting breastfeeding off to a good start. Even though breastfeeding is natural, mothers and babies have to learn to breastfeed together. Many of you have already had experience with breastfeeding and we hope that you will share your ideas with the rest of the class. We’re also going to talk about how newborns behave, so you’ll feel more ready for those first few weeks at home. I would like to start out by going around the room, having **each of you introduce yourself and let us know if this is your first baby or if you have other children.**”*(Participants share. Thank them for their participation.)*

By the end of this session, you will have:

1. Shared what worries you about becoming a new mom.
2. Discovered steps to aid in successful breastfeeding.
3. Practiced reading and responding to a baby’s cues.
4. Identified normal infant sleep patterns.



What are your questions about what we have planned for today?

Let’s begin...

1. Warm Up



From what you have heard from others or experienced yourself: what is stressful about being a new mom? *(Wait 5 seconds for response. Participants share and instructor writes answers on flipchart/white board. Instructor should affirm each person’s response. For example, “that is a very common concern of new moms” or “I can see how that would worry you” or “I hear that from many moms” or use a personalized response from when the teacher herself was pregnant, if applicable.)*

So it seems like being a new mom can be pretty stressful. From what you’ve mentioned, it sounds like babies waking up a lot at night, crying, and not knowing what your baby needs is stressful for new moms. We hope that this class will give you information to make you more confident about breastfeeding and understanding your baby.

2. (OPTIONAL) Video: 14 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

(SHOW VIDEO-16 minutes)

We’re going to get started by watching a video called “14 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.”

(Participants watch video. 16 minutes.)



What questions do you have about what you’ve just seen?
(Pause 5 seconds.)

WIC is here to help you get breastfeeding off to a good start. Please stay after class if you would like more information or have any questions.

Just as a mom and her baby learn to breastfeed together, they also learn to communicate with each other. At first, it may be hard to understand what your baby is trying to tell you, but it doesn't take long for you and your baby to develop your own special language. Let's talk a little bit about how to better understand your baby.

3. Newborn Behavior – Cues: Part 1



From what you've seen or heard, how do mothers know if their babies are getting enough to eat? *(Pause 5 seconds to wait for responses. Make a list of responses on a flip chart or white board.)*



Sounds like mothers use a **lot of ways** to tell if their babies get enough to eat. Sometimes they use their **babies' behavior**. For example, some parents think babies wake-up at night only because they are hungry, but babies wake-up for many reasons. Sometimes babies wake-up because they are too cold or hot or even because they need to breathe. Some moms also think that the only way to know if their babies have had enough to eat is to see them fall asleep afterwards.

Another common myth is that when babies cry a lot after a feeding they must still be hungry, but babies cry for **many** reasons. We will talk about a few of those reasons later in this class. Sometimes it is hard to understand your baby's needs. Because babies can't talk, babies try to show us what they need **by using their bodies and their voices**.

At first, they can't tell us very much. They can just tell us **if they are comfortable** and want us to feed them or play with them **OR if they are uncomfortable** and need something to be different. Some examples are...

(SHOW POSTER: "Baby's Talking")

Let's review the poster "Baby's Talking."

(Briefly review "I want to be near you/ I need a break" cues on poster)



What are your questions so far about how babies communicate?

4. Newborn Behavior – Cues: Part 2

(SHOW POSTER: "Why Babies Cry")

Hungry babies will do **many things** to tell you they are hungry. **Sometimes they cry, but not always**. If babies are crying but not doing **all of the other things** that mean hunger, you should probably **look for something else** to make the baby feel more comfortable.



Who would like to volunteer to read a few words? (Pass out “Why do Babies Cry?” handout to the group and have them follow along. Show volunteer section to read: “If your baby is hungry, he might:” on the page “Babies cry for many reasons.” If no one volunteers, instructor should read the section.)

Crying won’t always mean your baby is hungry. Babies are hard to understand at first, but it gets easier. We have another class here at WIC that you can take after your baby is born to help you understand your baby’s cues.

It can also be hard to understand why babies wake-up a lot. Your baby’s sleep patterns (sleeping or waking) are a behavior (one of the ways they react to what’s going on around them.) How babies sleep and wake-up also affects how moms feed them. Let’s talk a little more about how infants sleep and why it can be hard on new parents.

5. Newborn Behavior — Sleep

(SHOW POSTER: “Baby’s Sleeping: Let’s Guess”)

Babies will wake-up at night and try to tell parents that **they need something**. That can be **hard on parents**. But it only lasts a short time! By about 4 months old, your baby will wake-up a lot less.



From what you've heard or seen, how many times would you guess that your newborn baby will wake-up at night during the first month?

(Wait for responses. Thank everyone who participates. Write responses on poster.)

How many times would you guess that your baby will wake-up at 4 months?

At 6 months?

(Wait for responses. Thank everyone who participates. Write responses on poster.)



Wow, there are a lot of ideas about how many times babies wake-up at night. Every baby is different but research shows that most babies wake-up:

2-3 times per night by 1 month old

2 times per night by 4 months old

1 time per night by 6 months old

So, yes, babies do wake-up at night, but maybe not as much as moms might think. It might feel like your baby wakes up a lot more than this, especially when you are tired and waking up in the middle of the night. If your baby wakes up a lot more than this on a regular basis, talk to someone at WIC. We are here to help!

Parents might think that babies wake-up **only if they are hungry**. There are actually **many reasons why babies wake-up**. When babies sleep, part of the time they **sleep lightly**—we call this **active sleep**—and part of the time, they **sleep deeply**—which we call **quiet sleep**.

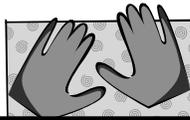
Listen as I read this true story of a night in the life of a new mom, Jennifer, and her 2 month old daughter, Lily.

(SHOW Sleep Picture Story)

The good news is that as babies get older, they start to sleep more like we do. By 4 months, babies start sleeping in quiet sleep and they don't wake-up as easily. They also sleep for longer stretches of time.

Now let's practice what you just learned...

(SHOW POSTER: "Understanding your Baby's Sleep")



- ❖ The 2 types of infant sleep are shown on this poster.
- ❖ One type is **Light Sleep** or "**Active Sleep**" and the other is **Deep Sleep** or "**Quiet Sleep.**"
- ❖ Now I will pass out cards that describe something about either light sleep or deep sleep.
- ❖ Using this handout (*pass out "Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby"*) place the card up on the board under the type of sleep it describes. (*Group participants into pairs of 2, or groups of 3, depending on class size. Divide cards evenly among the groups. Review answers when all cards are placed up on the poster.*)



Since dreaming and waking are so important for babies, what things might you do to make waking up with your newborn easier for you and your family? (Pause 5 seconds to wait for responses.)

*You can help your baby dream. You can put your baby down on his or her back to sleep. You can breastfeed your baby. You've all heard that putting your baby down on his or her back to sleep is good, right? Putting babies on their backs is an important way to protect them from SIDS.

6. Baby's First 6 weeks

(Pass out calendar)



A **calendar** has been created just for **you** with tips to help you get through the **1st 6 weeks** after your baby is born. This will be a **hard time** because you and your baby are trying to **get to know each other** and **learn how to communicate** with each other. It also gives you information about how babies sleep. Just know that the times of your baby waking up a lot will fly by. Soon he or she will sleep longer and fall asleep more easily! Remember, WIC is here to help you understand your baby better. Just ask us!



Who would like to volunteer to read the inside of the 1st page?

(If nobody volunteers, teacher can read the page.)

7. Closing- Changes as Your Baby Grows

It gets easier to understand and care for older babies but you will probably still have lots of questions. After your baby is born, we will have a class available to help you understand your baby's cues and sleeping patterns. Knowing more about these things will help you continue to breastfeed as your baby gets older. WIC can even help you keep breastfeeding if you decide to go back to work. (Pass out Breastfeeding while working WIC Handout)

In pairs, pick a card out of the basket:

- ❖ Share one thing you remember from today's class about the topic listed on your card.
- ❖ How will you use this information after your baby is born?
(Give participants about 1 minute to discuss, and then ask...)

Who would like to share what they learned with the group?

Thank you for participating in our class.
Have a great day!



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